

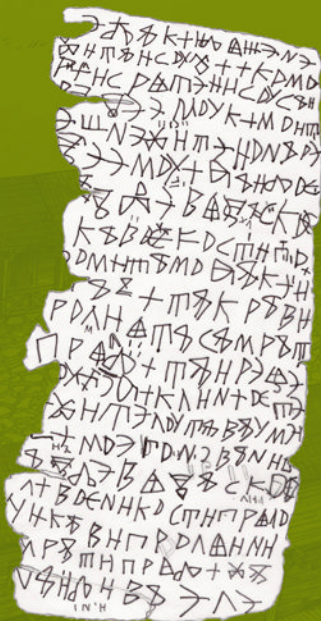
EAST CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, 450-1450

The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century

The Records of a Bygone Culture



Kiril Petkov



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BRILL

The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria,
Seventh-Fifteenth Century

East Central and Eastern
Europe in the Middle Ages,
450–1450

General Editor

Florin Curta

VOLUME 5

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2008

Cover illustration: Lead amulet with prayer against evil spirit. Glagolitic and Cyrillic, 10th or 11th Centuries, Haskovo, Bulgaria. Facsimile Kazimir Popkonstantinov.
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I dedicate this volume to the memory of Jordan Andreev (1939–2008), my teacher, mentor, and inspiration ever since I made my first steps in the profession. Rest in peace, *Voevoda*.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AI* Kazimir Popkonstantinov and Otto Kronsteiner, eds. and trans., *Starobalgarski nadpisi/Altbulgarischen Inschriften*, 2 vols. (= *Die Slavischen Sprachen*, vols. 36 & 52, Vienna, 1994–1997)
- Angelov, *Iz starata literatura* Bonju Angelov, *Iz starata balgarska, srpska, i ruska literatura* 4 vols. (Sofia, 1962–1980)
- PI* Veselin Beshevliev, *Die protobulgarischen Inschriften* (Berlin, 1963)
- MB* Thomas Butler, *Monumenta Bulgarica. A Bilingual Anthology of Bulgarian Texts from the 9th to the 19th Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1996)
- SBK* Ivan Dujchev, *Iz starata balgarska knižhnina* 2 vols. (Sofia, 1943–1944)
- BSM* Jordan Ivanov, *Balgarski starini iz Makedonija*, 2nd ed. (Sofia, 1970)
- Jordanov, *Korpus* Ivan Jordanov, *Korpus na pechatite na srednovkovna Balgarija* (Sofia, 2001)
- Kaľužniacki, *Werke* Emil Kaľužniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen Euthymius von Bulgarien (1375–1395)* (London, 1971)

INTRODUCTION

The records of a medieval culture in one volume? The historian of Western Europe (and the Middle East, China, and many other medieval cultures) will raise an eyebrow in justified disbelief. After all, just a single cartulary of a Western monastic foundation or the works of a respectable Middle Eastern or Chinese chronicler of the past fill volumes many times this one's size. So do the records left behind by the model civilization of the European southeast, Byzantium.

Regrettably, this is not the case with medieval Bulgaria. The vestiges of the past that can be legitimately called "voices of medieval Bulgarians," that is, original works produced by and for Bulgarians from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries and now extant as writings and images on stone, parchment, paper, metal, bone, or plaster are very few indeed. Six original royal charters, several scores of laconic stone inscriptions, a hundred or so even shorter graffiti, a couple of concise historical accounts, less than a handful of apocryphal works, two dozen saints' lives and eulogies, two notary records and as many adaptations of Byzantine legal codes (!), and a good amount of casual scribal and marginal notes: this is almost all that remains from the seven centuries of Bulgarian state tradition, from the formation of the Danubian Bulgar state in 680 to the suppression of its last remnants by the Ottomans in the early fifteenth century. There are no monastery or cathedral cartularies, no court records, no full-length historical works, no town archives, no notary books, no treatises on government or politics: in short, nothing of what constitutes the indispensable staple of the historian of the Middle Ages in most cultures.

Has there been more? It does seem so. Vague references to cartloads of manuscripts burned in the kitchens of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Greek bishops who took over the leadership of the Bulgarian Church during the Ottoman centuries, and dim recollections of single valuable books and precious family records hastily buried under the floors or hidden in the walls of long forgotten and now crumbled churches suggest that yes, there has been more. The chances of new evidence coming to light, however, are increasingly remote. Scholars are reduced to assigning blame for the extinction of the once verifiably rich literary and documentary tradition while having to come to terms

with the fact that mostly ecclesiastical monuments are extant—above all, the standard fare of liturgy. Except for an exciting new find of a stone inscription or graffiti, dug out by the shovel of the archeologist, there is not much more to hope for. The political, social, economic, and cultural history of medieval Bulgaria, a flourishing civilization in its own right, which at one time comprised most of the European southeast, has to be written on the basis of foreign, predominantly Byzantine sources and conjectures made on the meager original records there are. And except for the historian of language, not much else is available to the diligent student of the Bulgarian medieval experience and achievement. The foreign evidence is overwhelmingly superior. Without Byzantine chroniclers such as Theophan and Patriarch Nicephoros, Skylitzes-Kedrinus, Nicetas Choniates, George Acropolites, Pachymeres, John Kantakuzenos, to name but a few, without some Frankish annals, records of the Papal chancery, without the crusaders Robert de Clary and Geoffrey de Villehardoine and, say, the records of the archbishopric of Ohrid and the commercial books of the citizens of the Italian maritime republics, Venice and Genoa, the Bulgarian Middle Ages would be an almost total mystery.

And yet, the voice of the foreigner ought not to supplant the voice of the native. The original Bulgarian records result from seven centuries of state life, the product of solid political institutions built, quashed, and then rekindled, a robust economy supporting a vibrant urban life, and an almost constant military effort for both supremacy and survival, as well as a long-established literary tradition which left a deep impact on the rest of the Balkan and Slavic literatures. The tip of the iceberg now swept under the tides of time and political vicissitudes, such evidence testifies, among other things, to the unique features of Bulgarian historical consciousness, political custom, and religious sensibility as well as the culture's conformity to the broad currents of medieval Europe's cultural development and evolution. A good example of the former would be the Bulgar, and then the Bulgarian stone annalistic, a phenomenon without a parallel in Byzantium and the medieval West. A no less pertinent case for the latter are the *Lives* of the eleventh- and twelfth-century saints, witnesses for the outburst of spiritualism that seized the hearts of Western Catholics in the same period to rejuvenate Christianity with a new vigor.

As lean as the original evidence is, gathering it in a single volume of translations is still a challenge. The voices of the medieval Bulgarians now extant are often precious nuggets hidden in the vast landslide of

works translated from the Greek. Extracting them by necessity deprives them of context. This deficiency can only partly be offset by the short words preceding the translation of the record. Several later medieval works, the products of the fourteenth-century trend for rectification and beautification of earlier writings, for example, are the delight of the expert in south Slavic languages, but lose much if not all of their luster and meaning in translation. Next, the quite voluminous and popular genre of apocrypha contains mostly either direct and close Old- and Middle Bulgarian translations of their Byzantine Greek prototypes or compilations from different Greek works conveying their ideas in a different but still conventional manner. For these reasons, as much as I have striven to present the works in full translation, a selective approach had to be adopted in many cases. Nevertheless, as of the time of this volume's publication, the texts that follow are a fully representative, and in most cases comprehensive, collection rendering the original voices of medieval Bulgaria in modern English.

The fullest collection is that of seal and ring inscriptions. The bulk of them are royal seals, of which exemplars for practically all Bulgarian rulers are extant, with several variants in some cases. The few rings and ring-seals of magnates and ecclesiastical dignitaries are chance survivals.

The stone records tradition—annals, funeral and building inscriptions, dedicatory and triumphal notes on stone—is equally full and is supplemented with an exhaustive inventory representing the growing group of graffiti. Stretching in an almost uninterrupted chain from the beginning of the eighth to the early fifteenth century this genre has been the subject of intense study and excellent editions. And while the stone annals reflect the official positions of church and state, the numerous graffiti shed light on the literacy level of the populace, their fears, desires, and preoccupations.

The records properly called documents—the output of royal and noble chanceries—are presented in full. In addition to the genuine charters, treaties, and privileges issued by the Bulgarian tsars and the sole charter of a great noble, I have included excerpts from a few forgeries dating from the centuries of Ottoman rule of the Bulgarian lands, for they were based on now lost originals.

In a sense, the migration of history writing from stone to parchment (and later paper), which occurred after the conversion to Christianity and the development of a literary tradition in Old Bulgarian (Slavic) is a regrettable fact. The stone annals, on walls, columns, and slabs,

still stand. The native historical record on perishable material, referred to by such illustrious figures as the Bulgarian Tsars Kaloyan and Ioan Alexander, is all but non-existent. This volume gathers practically all that can be termed “original history writing” during the medieval centuries. To the scholar of conventional history writing and annalistic, the record would be meager indeed, and the boundaries of the genre might appear quite stretched-out and elastic. I have tried, however, to present all—and in full—of the mediums which register the dimensions of the medieval Bulgarian historical consciousness; a single omission is Constantine of Preslav’s wholly compilatory work “Histories,” a short universal annals directly translated from the Greek. The lengthy scribal and marginal notes with historical content that I have included, the excerpts from saints’ *Lives* with purely historical content, and the later medieval compilations based on earlier works I collected here do testify to the blurred boundaries or incomplete mastery of the native genre of history writing. They also provide valuable clues, I would argue, for the presence of a pervasive and elaborate historical tradition that unfortunately appears to be lost to us. The high medieval eschatological annals based on the folk tradition are an important segment of this genre; the entire collection of these annals is presented here, illustrating what appears to be a specifically Bulgarian way of making sense of history in the absence of a native state institution.

The *Lives* and eulogies of Bulgarian saints and domesticated Byzantine holy figures are next in terms of volume. The diligent student of Slavic letters will notice that there are two substantial omissions in this group: the *Long Lives* of the Slavic apostles in the beginning of the tradition and the several saintly *Lives* (re)worked by Patriarch Euthymius in the latter part of the fourteenth century, at its end. The reasons are the selection benchmarks of this volume. The *Long Lives*, while extremely valuable for setting off the subsequent outburst of creative literary energy on Bulgarian soil and by Bulgarians, are not an original Bulgarian product. Euthymius’ output, on the other hand, while original and Bulgarian, is more valuable for its style and language, the province of the expert in Slavic language and letters. It shines in Middle Bulgarian with its “weaving of wreaths of words,” but yields little otherwise, and its brilliance is lost in translation. Similar is the case with the works of Euthymius’s disciples, Cyprian and Gregory Tsamblak. I have, therefore, extracted the snippets or larger segments of these foremost literati’s voluminous works that afford a glimpse at their stylistic approach, their composition skill, and the few comments

on contemporary or past historical occurrences that they chose to weave into the accounts. Notably present in this group, however, are the *Lives* of Bulgarian personages that have reached us in Byzantine Greek versions: the *Long Life* of Clement of Ohrid and the *Lives* of the fourteenth-century Bulgarian hermits and hesychasts Theodosius and Romil. While their authors and medium are not Bulgarian, they rest on and render authentic Bulgarian experiences.

I have been more selective with works on Christian instruction. On the one hand, there are only a few examples of the voluminous output of Clement of Ohrid, Constantine of Preslav, and Joan Exarch that can be considered their original contribution. On the other, the contents of the genre are fairly stable and conventional. To avoid redundancy, only a few samples of Clement's sermons, Joan Exarch's compendiums, and Constantine's poetry have been selected to testify to their author's biblical erudition, profuse eloquence, and stylistic and compositional perfection.

Ecclesiastical records on dogmatic and doctrinal matters are scant in the Bulgarian tradition. The paramount source here is the *Synodikon*, complemented by Kosmas' lengthy and informative anti-Bogomil treatise, and a few letters of Euthymius. The Bulgarian matters in these works are presented in full, as are the Bogomil ideas preserved in Latin sources.

I have been most skittish in the application of the selection criteria of this volume to one of the largest groups of sources: the apocrypha. Hundreds of works circulated in the medieval centuries in Old and Middle Bulgarian and enjoyed wide popularity: almost all of them were verbatim translations of Byzantine Greek texts of long standing. Consequently, I have omitted the great majority, preferring to include only a few texts that are recognized as genuine Bulgarian works. They too draw on Byzantine sources, but the native authorial touch is unmistakable.

The mentality presented in the apocrypha, the eschatological "prophecies" and annals, and some of the short saints' *Lives*, informs what is loosely and perhaps incorrectly defined as popular culture: incantations and charms, superstitions, and vestiges of pagan belief. Not much of this genre is extant in writing, but the evidence is piling up: finds of prayers and incantations on lead amulets, for example, are growing and will soon be examined as an illustration of the Bulgarian reception of yet another strand of Byzantine and Near Eastern mentality going back to Antiquity.

Finally, a large group of genuinely Bulgarian voices comes from the people to whom we owe it all: the humble (or more exalted) scribes and clerks who endeavored to put down in writing what we now read. Several hundreds of their marginal notes populate the medieval manuscripts, with contents ranging from complaints about the unusually cold weather to eulogies of their royal patrons. I have limited the selection to those of them that offer time- and place-specific historical information and insights into the mental world and preoccupations of their authors.

All translations in this volume are mine. Where previous translations exist I have consulted them and they are indicated in the introduction to the respective entry. The translations were made from critical editions of the texts; on a few occasions where editions did not exist or appeared confusing I have gone directly to the original manuscript or epigraphic source. The short introductions to the documents usually list the first and the most recent critical edition and translations into English, where they exist. The few words I offer to each document attempt to provide some context and starting points for analysis and interpretation. The bibliography listed in the end is selective and intends to inform the reader of any English- and Western-language secondary works engaging the specific document and to direct the reader with a command of Bulgarian to the inquiries done by Bulgarian scholars.

In rendering Bulgarian personal and place-names I have preferred to keep the transliteration as close to the original as possible, using Ioan Asen instead of John Asen, Ilarion instead of Hillary, etc. Exception is made for St. John of Rila, for the Gallicized form of his name has become standard. Byzantine, Western, and Near Eastern personal and place names have been used according to the accepted conventions: Constantinople instead of “Tsarigrad” (“The City of the Emperor”), Thessaloniki instead of Solun, Constantine instead of Konstandin, Ioan instead of John or Ivan, and “Byzantines” instead of *Romaioi* or “Greeks,” the traditional Bulgarian form.

In the past hundred years or so, as the study of medieval Europe marked its turf as an area of legitimate inquiry, compartmentalization and fragmentation of the field became the norm. Western Europeanists, on the one hand, and Byzantinists and scholars of the various east-central, southeastern, and eastern European countries and cultures, on the other, hardly speak to one another. When they do, the level of discourse, perhaps to ensure mutual understanding, is not of the highest order. As of late, a good amount of fine scholarship dedicated

specifically to southeastern Europe has made the boundaries between East and West, Catholic and Greek Orthodox, and those between Slav, Frank, and Byzantine, appear more permeable. Genuine discourse, however, will not be fully possible until each side has a solid grasp of the primary material available to the “other” scholarly traditions. It is the translator’s hope that the present volume will make a small step in this direction.

PART ONE

PAGAN PERIOD, CA. 600–864
MIGRATIONS, SETTLEMENT, AND
CONSOLIDATION OF THE STATE

Seals

Ring seals of the patrician Koubrat (c. 635–665), ruler of Great Bulgaria, father of Asparuch and Kouber, founders of Bulgar polities south of the river Danube. 1

These three gold ring seals were discovered in a rich funeral find at the village of Malaja Pereshchepina, Ukraine, northeast of the Sea of Azov, dated around the third quarter of the seventh century. The seals are monograms and require untying. The inscriptions identify the owner with the father of Asparuch, the leader of the Bulgar migration south of the Danube in 680 and the traditional founder of the Danubian Bulgar state, and with the ruler named Kurt in the *Name List of the Bulgar Khans*. The ninth-century Byzantine annalists Theophanes, Patriarch Nicephoros, and John of Nikiu inform us that Kurt-Koubrat was most likely the Bulgar ruler who visited Constantinople in 619 and was baptized there, led a successful rebellion against the Avars ca. 635, and ruled over a short-lived Great Bulgaria, a tribal confederation dominated by the Bulgar tribe of Hunnugunduri around the Sea of Azov until the late 660s. His polity was destroyed by a massive Khazar invasion shortly after his death. Edition: Jordanov, *Kórpys*, 11–12.

XOYBPA(T)OY

XOYBPATOY P(ATPI)K(IOY)

XOYBPATE

Lead seal of the patrician Mauros. 2

All of the information about this Bulgar noble comes from the Byzantine Greek collection known as the *Miracles of St Demetrius of Thessaloniki*, II, 5:292 sq. Mauros was a relative of Kouber, Koubrat's son, and a member of the Bulgarian ruling elite who led a large group of Bulgars to the district of Thessaloniki in the last quarter of the seventh century. As part of the plan to take over the city, in the late 670s Mauros feigned defection and accepted Byzantine office. When the plan was foiled, he and the contingent he led, a mixed population referred to as Sermesianoi, were moved outside the town walls. Somehow Mauros managed to clear his name and was appointed military commander in the diocese of Thrace. Years later he got involved in another

of Kouber's plans to take over Thessaloniki. This time around he was supposed to assassinate the emperor. The plan failed, for Mauro's son informed the authorities. Again, Mauro's Bulgar connections saved his life; he was put under home arrest in a suburb of Constantinople outside the city walls. His subsequent fate is unknown. The invocation of the Mother of God does not indicate conversion to Christianity. Edition: G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals I*: 1–3 (Basel, 1972), # 934; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 13–15.

+ *Patrician* Mauro's, prince of Sirmisians and Bulgars.

3 *Lead seal of Esagis, spatarokandidate and prince of the Vihite Slavs.*

The seal records all that is known about this tribal leader or prince, one of the several Slavic leaders who led migrating Slavic groups into the territory of Byzantium in the seventh and eight centuries. His title reflects the Byzantine effort to co-opt Slavic leadership. Edition: Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, # 1877.

+ Mother of God help your servant Esagis, imperial *spatarokandidate* and prince of the Vihites.

4 *Lead seal of Tarasius, hipatus and prince of the Kouberian Bulgarians.*

Nothing more is known about Tarasius, another defector and highly placed member of the group led by Kouber. As in the case of Mauro's, his co-optation was an attempt to split Bulgar leadership and neutralize the threat of the large force led by Kouber, as well as an expression of the barbarian leaders' striving for legitimacy within the Byzantine imperial framework. Edition: Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, # 2408.

+ Mother of God help Tarasius, *hipatus* and prince of the Kouberians.

5 *Lead seal of N. imperial spatarius and prince of the Evidit Slavs.*

The seal is the only evidence about this unknown seventh-eight century prince of the Evidit Slavs. Edition: Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, # 2647.

+ Mother of God help... your servant, imperial *spatarius* and prince of the Evidits.

6 *Lead seal of the caesar Tervel, Bulgar khan.*

Tervel (701–718) was the second recorded ruler of the Bulgars south of the Danube. His relatively peaceful relationship with the Empire documented by a trade treaty, his assistance of Emperor Justinian II's second accession to the Byzantine throne, and the military assistance he offered Byzantium in the repulsion of the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717–718 all account for the high title with which he was rewarded. Editions: Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, # 2672; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 19.

+ Mother of God help the *caesar* Tervel.

Lead seal of the patrician Telerig-Theophilactus (former ruler of the Bulgarians). 7

Telerig (768–777) was a Bulgar ruler whose troubled reign ended with exile in Constantinople, where he received protection and an honorary title. Unlike other Slavic and Bulgar leaders who remained pagan, the legend on the seal indicates that he had converted to Christianity. Editions: Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, # 3188; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 21.

+ Christ help the *patrician* Telerig-Theophilactus.

Seal of Humir, patrician. 8

Nothing more is known about Humir, apparently an eight-century high Bulgarian noble who sought refuge or promotion in Byzantium and was granted the high title of patrician. Edition: Bozhilov, *Balgarite vav Vizantija*, 357.

+ Humir *patrician*

Gold medallion of Khan Omurtag (814–831). 9

Two of those medallions are extant, minted with the same die. Omurtag's official title and the political ideology it reflects has been discussed in detail, most recently by Tsvetelin Stepanov, "The Bulgar Title KANAΣYBIGI: reconstructing the notions of divine kingship in Bulgaria, AD 822–836," *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. 10 (2001), 1–19. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 25–6.

Kana *sybegi* Omortag

Stone Annals

Name List of the Bulgar Khans. 10

The *Name-list of the Bulgar Khans* is the earliest annalistic record of the pagan Bulgars south of the Danube. It was composed in Greek, most likely on stone. Its first segment was most likely completed during the reign of Asparuch, the ruler who led the settlement on Byzantine territory south of the Danube in the early 680s, and then it was added to until the mid-eighth century. In the late ninth or early tenth century it was translated into Old Slavonic (Bulgarian) language and is currently preserved in three Old Russian copies in the compilation *Letopisec elinski i rimski*, dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The *Name List* contains unique evidence about the cyclical calendar of the Bulgars, which has been linked to the calendars of other Central Asian Turkic peoples and the Chinese calendar, about early Bulgar language and culture, the Bulgars' mythical ties to the Huns, the steppe people prominent during the Great Migrations, the Bulgar state tradition, the migration south of the Danube, the custom of stone annalistic, and the eight-century dynastic changes. Edition: Omeljan Pritsak, *Die bulgarische Fürstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren* (Wiesbaden, 1955), 76–7 and *PI*, 306.

Avitohol¹ lived 300 years, his clan [was] Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] snake, *dilom*, ninth [month], *twirem*.

Irnik lived 150 years, his clan Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] snake, *dilom*, ninth [month], *twirem*.

Gostun was a governor for 2 years, his clan Ermi. He was given power [in the year of the] swine, *dox*, ninth [month], *twirem*.

Kurt² ruled 60 years, his clan Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] ox, *shigor*, third [month], *vecem*.

Bezmer³ 3 years, his clan Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] ox, *shigor*, third [month], *vecem*.

These five princes ruled the principdom on the other side of the Danube for 515 years with shaved heads. After that prince Isparih⁴ came to this side of the Danube. It is the same until this day.⁵

Espereh⁶ prince 61 years, his clan Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] tiger, *vereni*, first [month], *alem*.

Tervel⁶ 21 years, his clan Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] ram, *tekucitem*, ninth [month], *twirem*.

...28 years,⁷ his clan Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] rabbit, *dvansh*, sixth [month], *altom*.

Sevar⁸ 15 years, his clan Doulo. He was given power [in the year of the] hen, *tox*, sixth [month], *altom*.

Kormisosh⁹ 17 years, his clan Vokil. He was given power [in the year of the] ox, *shigor*, ninth [month]. This prince changed the clan of Doulo, which is to say Vihtun.

¹ The mythical rulers of the ancient Bulgars, Avitohol and Irnik, are identified by some scholars with Attila the Hun and his son Ernach who established himself in the Balkans after the death of Attila.

² Most likely Koubrat.

³ Identified with Bayan, Koubrat's eldest son who remained in Great Bulgaria and was routed by the Khazars.

⁴ Asparuch, the leader of the Bulgars who settled on the Danube. Note the difference in the rendition of the name in the next entry. The name has the meaning of "white horse" or "rider of the white horse."

⁵ This sentence indicates that the first part of the *Name List* might have been completed under Asparuch or Tervel.

⁶ Tervel (701–718).

⁷ This anonymous ruler reigned for a much shorter period, during the years 718–724.

⁸ Sevar (724–739).

⁹ Kormisosh (739–756).

Vineh¹⁰ 7 years, his clan Ukil. He was given power [in the year of the] ox, first [month], *alem*.

Telets¹¹ 3 years, his clan Ugain. He was given power [in the year of the] mouse, *somor*, sixth [month], *altem*. And he ruled in place of another.

Umor¹² 40 days, his clan Ukil. He was given power [in the year of the] snake, *dilom*, fourth [month], *tutom*.

Stone inscriptions on the rock of Madara.

Soon after the settlement in 680–681, the Bulgar rulers had a monumental triumphal rider carved out in low relief on the face of the rock of Madara in northeastern Bulgaria. The inscriptions on both sides of the relief are in the names of the rulers Tervel (701–718), Krum (802–814), and Omurtag (814–831) and record their interaction with Byzantium, as well as the location of another Bulgar settlement at Thessaloniki, the polity of Kouber. Suspicious of Byzantium’s exclusive claim to the Roman legacy and universal rule, the inscriptions identify the Byzantines as “Greeks,” a tradition kept in Bulgaria until the end of Byzantium. The face of the rock is now very worn out and only fragments of the once much longer inscriptions are legible. Edition: *PI*, 97–99. 11

1. Justinian the emperor¹³ made a treaty...the Bulgars...and came to Tervel. My uncles at Thessaloniki¹⁴ did not trust the emperor with the cut-off nose and went back to the Kisiniie...one of his...The ruler Tervel made a treaty and gave to the emperor five thousand...With my help the emperor scored a fine victory.¹⁵
2. ...gold. He gave eighteen...gold the ruler...soldiers...a ruler...the Greeks...what I gave to you, I will give you every year and the emperor sent to the ruler...and asked the ruler Krumesis...the ruler...divided the gold...began...he gave from...the ruler Krumesis gave...that sea...you did...the ruler...war they tore the treaties...war...then...name.

¹⁰ Vinech (756–761).

¹¹ Telets (761–764).

¹² Umor reigned for forty days in August–September 766 and was replaced by Telerig (766–777).

¹³ Justinian II (685–695, 705–711).

¹⁴ Tervel refers to the leaders of the Bulgars which settled around Thessaloniki, one of whom was his father’s brother Kouber.

¹⁵ The inscription refers to the help provided by Tervel to Emperor Justinian II Rinomete in 705.

3. ...he was raised...tore and Omurtag the ruler set by god sent... to help me.¹⁶

12 *Stone inscriptions of the Bulgar ruler Krum (802–814).*

Like most of the Bulgar stone annals, this inscription is on a column and documents the clash with Byzantium and Krum's victory over the emperor Nicephoros Genikos (802–811) in 811. After an initial success during which Nicephoros took the Bulgar capital Pliska and burned it down, he allowed himself to be surprised in the mountain pass of Varbitsa on July 26, 811. The Byzantines were completely routed, the emperor was killed and his silver-plated skull was made into a ceremonial drinking cup of the Bulgar rulers. After the victory Krum unleashed a total war on Byzantium in the course of which he reached the sea coast below Constantinople where he made ritual sacrifices. Edition: *PI*, 137.

1. ...and he, after winning, set off...Greeks to Markela...gryphon. And from here Nicephorus set off...due to his wickedness that they do not come together...Greeks and came together again... Greeks...god did and...and the Greeks found...city and stayed in...came to Adrianopolis and...and the polemarchs...
2. ...and his troops...Krum won and set off...made a sacrifice on the sea coast...
3. ...brother...and died...the emperor...

13 *Stone inscription of the Bulgar ruler Krum from Hambarli.*

The inscription commemorates the victories of Krum during the wars of 811–813, following Emperor Nicephoros' disastrous expedition of 811. The Byzantine ruler referred to here is Emperor Michael Rangabe (811–813), and the Bulgar incursions and conquests followed with a new victory over the Byzantines on June 22, 813, at the Thracian town of Versinikia. The Low Country is Thrace. The god mentioned is still the pagan sky deity of the Bulgars. Edition: *PI*, 125–6.

...ruler...him. And his brother did not desert him, but he too, took the field of war.¹⁷ And god gave him to devastate these places and strongholds: Serdica, Deultum, Constantia, Versinikia, Adrianopolis. He took all these well protected fortresses. God instilled fear in the *Romaioi* and they deserted other [fortresses] and fled. And he did not forget

¹⁶ Nothing but the approximate date of the inscription can be ascertained, 814–831.

¹⁷ Krum's brother; he has been identified with a certain Ditsev but the argument is shaky.

the Low Country, from where the old bald emperor set off to war and burned our settlements and enslaved everyone, forgetting the oaths. And the ruler Krum took the field against him to wage war... and set off... and devastated...

Second stone inscription of the Bulgar ruler Krum from Hambarli, end of 813. 14

The inscription records the strategic arrangements and division of military leadership in preparation for the continuing war with Byzantium. It notes the names and titles of the state and army's (*saract*) two chief officials, the *kavhan* and the *ichurgu-boila*, the territorial boundaries of the Bulgar state, and the presence of Byzantine generals in Bulgar service.

...*kavhan*... made my brother and put the *strategos* Leon under him. From Beroe and... to Doultroini commander is *ichurgu-boila* Tuk for the right side, and the *strategoï* Vardan and Joannes are under him. For the left side of my *saract*, Anchialo, Deultum, Sozopolis, Ranuli, commander is the *boila kavhan* Iratais, and Kordilas and Gregoras are under him.

Stone Inscription of the Bulgar ruler Krum from the capital Pliska. 15

Another inscription on a stone column recording victories in the ongoing war with Byzantium. Edition: *PI*, 147.

...set off... sent people back. He took these fortresses...

Thirty-year peace treaty between Bulgaria and Byzantium: stone inscription of the Bulgar ruler Omurtag from Suleimankoi (now Setchishte, northeastern Bulgaria). 16

The treaty from 815 AD (renewed in 820 with Emperor Michael Balba, (820–829)) between the ruler Omurtag (814–831) and the Byzantine Emperor Leo V (813–820) officially ended the wars that began under Krum and Nicephorus I. Only five of its eleven chapters are preserved. The extant chapters outline the frontier between Bulgaria and Byzantium acknowledging some Bulgar acquisitions; establish spheres of control over Slavic tribes in the areas round about the frontier; arrange for the exchange and ransom of the prisoners of war; and negotiate the treatment of defectors. Editions: J. Bury, "The Bulgarian Treaty of AD 814 and the great fence of Thrace," *The English Historical Review* 25 (1910), 276–87; *PI*, 152.

...envoys. And he sent the *kavhan* Iratais to make peace for thirty years. The first of the eleven chapters agreed upon is about the frontier. Let it be from Deultum to Potamoukastel and between the two Auroleva and to the many bridges between Baldazena and Agatoniki and to Leuka and to Constance and to the Makri meadow, and to the river Hebros

and the Hemus mountain.¹⁸ We agreed that this will be the frontier. The second chapter is about the Slavs under imperial rule. They should stay where they were when the war began. The third chapter is about the Slavs who live along the sea coast¹⁹ and are not ruled by the Emperor. He should send them back to their settlements. The fourth chapter is about the Christian prisoners of war and those captured...for the *turmarchs*, *spatarii*, and the *comites*. He will give...the rank and file will be a man for a man. Two water buffalos will be given for those captured in a fortress, if...villages. If a *strategos* defected....

17 *Bulgarian-Byzantine Treaty of 820.*

This fragmentary inscription is record of the ratification of the earlier Bulgar-Byzantine treaty in 820. Edition: *PI*, 209 (#43).

...his...forgot their oaths...and let god give them...Tuk was sent and...his brother. The name of the ruler is Omurtag, khan *sybigi*. The year of the true God was 820, from the creation of the world 6328. Made a written treaty and swore...the chapters written down in the treaties that were exchanged.

18 *Military inventories stone inscriptions, eight-ninth centuries.*

The inventories record the highly complex organization of the Bulgar military, several of the titles of its officers, their responsibilities within the core area of the state and its "outer" provinces, and the general division of two levels of authority exercised by the members of the upper social class of *boilas* and the lower nobility, the *bagaines*. Edition: Veselin Besevliev, "Protobulgarica I. Eine neue Inventarinschrift," *Studia in Honor of Roman Jakobson* (The Hague, 1967), 222–24 and *PI*, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52.

Barsa [the *biri bagain*]...in the district of...he is entrusted with...coats of mail...helmets 157.

Bagatur bagain has altogether 53 coats of mail and 54 helmets.

Yuk boila has 23 coats of mail, *itchurgu bagain* 12, *zıtko miro*s 17, *yuk bagain* 22, *biri bagain* 22.

¹⁸ The place names have been subject of intense discussion and are not fully identifiable; in general, the border run westward from the old Roman colony of Deultum to the river Maritsa and from there turned north to Stara Planina.

¹⁹ Most likely the Black Sea coast.

Setit bagain controls in all 83 coats of mail and 70 helmets.

Žitko itchurgu boila plate coats of mail 455, helmets 540; coats of mail 427, helmets 854.

Tortuna pile zhupan plate coats of mail 20, helmets 40, coat of mail 1, helmet 1.

Triumphal inscription on stone columns, ninth century (battles and fortresses seized). 19
The inscriptions outline the areas of operation of Bulgar armies during the Bulgar-Byzantine wars of the late eighth and ninth centuries, document the Bulgar's technical capacity to take fortified strongholds, record military conflicts unknown from Byzantine sources, and confirm the Bulgar custom of recording important historical events on stone. Most of the fortresses have been taken during Khan Krum's war with Byzantium in the period 811–813. Edition: *PI*, 177–89 (# 16–40).

- + Battle at Seres
- + Battle at Ticha
- + Battle at Versinikia
- + Fortress Burdizo
- + Fortress Dimotika
- + Fortress Rodosto
- + Fortress Theodoropulos
- + Fortress Theodosiopolis
- + Fortress Garialis
- + Fortress Arkadiopolis
- + Fortress Byza
- + Fortress Sozopolis
- + Fortress Mesembria
- + Fortress Bukelion
- + Fortress Skutarion

Funeral inscription in memoriam of Omurtag's and Malamir's officials, 20
ninth century.

These inscriptions are the most precious evidence about the highly developed system of ranks and offices held by members of the Bulgar military elite and the upper classes in the first half of the ninth century, during the reigns of Omurtag (814–831) and Malamir (831–836). For the title of the rulers see the note under # 15. Edition: *PI*, 281, 285, 287, 289, 291, 292–6, 298 (#58–68).

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag [says]: *kopan* Korsis ate at my table. He went off to war and drowned in the river Dnieper. He belonged to the clan Tchakarar.

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag [says]: *zera tarkan* Negavon ate at my table. He went off to war and drowned in the river Theiss. He belonged to the clan Kuviar.

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag [says]: *zhupan tarkan* Hsun ate at my table. He died in the war. He belonged to the clan Kurigir.

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag [says]: Boi...vu...i...ate at my table. He went off to war and died. He belonged to the clan...duar.

[Khan *sybigi* Omurtag says]:...*zhupan* ate at my table. He got sick and died. He belonged to the clan Ermiar.

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag [says]: *bagatur bagain* Slavna ate at my table. He got sick and died.

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag [says]: *kolober itchurgu kolober* ate at my table and died in [the inner district].²⁰

[Khan *sybigi* Omurtag says]: *tarkan*...ate at my table and died...

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag [says]: the *candidate* Turdachis ate at my table. He died in [the inner district].

Khan *sybigi* Malamir [says]: Tchepa was *bogotor boila kolober* and ate at the ruler's table. He got sick and died. This was put in his memory.

21 *Inscription on gold medallion of Omurtag.*

Edition: Ivan Jordanov, "Ednostranni zlatni moneti-madalioni s imeto na han Omurtag," *Archeologia* 19:4 (1977).

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag.

22 *Building inscription of Omurtag from Tsar Krum, northeastern Bulgaria.*

The inscription documents Omurtag's building activities during the 30-year peace with Byzantium and bears a strong resemblance to other Turkic inscriptions in this vein. The date is September 1, 821–August 31, 822. The events described can be identified with Omurtag's help to Emperor Michael II Balba in suppressing the rebellion of the Thomas the Slav in late 822 or early 823. The "emperor" trampled upon by Omurtag can only be Thomas who was indeed proclaimed emperor by the patriarch of Antioch; it is unlikely that the reference is to Michael II with whom Omurtag had just renewed the 30-year peace treaty. Edition: *PI*, 260–61 (#56)

²⁰ In the inner district of the state, controlled by the *ichurgu boila*.

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag is ruler from god in [of?] the land where he was born. Residing in the camp Pliska he had an *aul* built at Tucha²¹ and moved there his army against the Greeks and the Slavs. And he made skillfully a bridge over Tucha alongside the *aul* and erected in that *aul* four columns and put on the columns two lions. Let god give the ruler whom he has made to trample well with his feet the emperor for as long as Tucha flows and the sun [shines], to rule over the many Bulgarians and subjugate his enemies, and live in joy and delight one hundred years. The time when this was made was [according to the] Bulgar [custom] *sigor elem*, and [according to] the Greek [custom] fifteenth *indiction*.

Stone inscription of Omurtag, Veliko Tarnovo.

23

The inscription was found in the Second Kingdom's capital Tarnov, where it has been transported, most likely in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, to stress the continuity in the Bulgarian state tradition. The distance from Pliska to the new fortress/settlement indicated in the inscription points to the town of Dristra (modern Silistra) as the most likely place of the new *aul*. Edition: *PI*, 247 (#55).

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag, remaining in his old palace, [had a] glorious palace built at the Danube. Measuring [the distance] between the two glorious palaces, I made a mound in the middle. From the middle of the mound to my old *aul* there are twenty thousand *orgies*, and [from there] to the Danube there are twenty thousand *orgies*. The mound itself is glorious. When they measured the land, I made this writing. Man, even if he lives well, dies, and another is born. Let those born later, when they see this [writing] remember the one who made it. The name of the ruler is Omurtag, khan *sybigi*. May god grant him to live one hundred years!

Inscription of Omurtag on the rock of Madara.

24

Omurtag's inscription continues the tradition of the ruling houses, dating back to the time of the settlement, to use the face of the rock of Madara as a monumental history book on which their deeds were recorded. This inscription is one of the few pieces of evidence for the supreme deity of the Bulgars, the heavenly god Tangra. Edition: *PI*, 149 (#6).

Khan *sybigi* Omurtag, ruler from god...was...and made sacrifice to god Tangra...*itchurgu boila*...gold...

²¹ The river Kamchija north of Stara Planina. The meaning of *aul* ranges from house to settlement to fortress to residence.

25 *Stone annals of the ruler Malamir, 836.*

The inscription records the renewed hostilities with Byzantium and the breaking of the thirty-year peace concluded by Omurtag. The new ruler, Malamir (831–836), was a minor and *kavhan* Isbul, his father's chief official, served as regent. Omurtag's elder son, Enravota, converted to Christianity and was martyred. Information about the rest of the male members of the ruling family is confusing. A second son, Zvinitza, either died young, which cleared the way for his son, Persian, to take over after Malamir's untimely death, or had a second name and inherited from Malamir. The inscription records the war with Emperor Theophilos (829–842) who used the lapsing of the 30-year peace in 836 to invade northern Thrace. The Bulgars repulsed the invasion, advanced south and took over the key city of Philipopolis (modern Plovdiv) after a short siege and negotiations thus cementing their hold on the territories south of Stara Planina (Hemus). Edition: *PI*, 156 (#13).

Khan *sybigi* Malamir is ruler from god. My grandfather Krum found these things with us [?]. My father, the ruler Omurtag, made a thirty year peace and lived well with the Greeks. I too, lived well with them in the beginning, but the Greeks devastated our lands. The ruler Malamir, who reigned together with the *kavhan* Isbul, took the field against the Greeks with his army and devastated the fortress Provat, the fortress Burdizo, and the lands of the Greeks. Covered with glory, he came to Philipopolis and the Greeks fled. *Kavhan* Isbul, together with the glorious ruler conducted negotiations with the citizens of Philipopolis.

26 *Aqueduct building inscription from the time of Malamir and his kavhan Isbul, district of Shumen, northeast Bulgaria.*

Edition: *PI*, 277 (#57).

Khan *sybigi* Malamir, made ruler by god, [says]: His old *boila kavhan* Isbul made an aqueduct and gave it to the ruler. The ruler gave to the Bulgars to eat and drink many times and to the *boilas* and *bagains* [he gave] great presents. May god grant to the ruler from god to live one hundred years together with *kavhan* Isbul.

27 *Stone inscription of Khan Persian from Philippi, southern Thrace, 837.*

Malamir ruled for five years and has succeeded by his nephew Persian (or Presian) (836–852), either the son of Malamir's brother Zvinitza, or Zvinitza himself, who began his reign under the direction of the *kavhan* Isbul and continued the war with Byzantium with a strategic move to the Rhodope mountains, where he attempted to co-opt the Slavic tribe of Smolijani. This inscription records Bulgar operations south of the Rhodope and along the Aegean coast. It has been suggested that the "Christians" mentioned here are not the Byzantines in general but the citizens of Chrisopolis (modern Kavala). Edition: *PI*, 164–5 (#14).

1. Presian, from god ruler of the many Bulgars sent *kavhan* Isbul, giving him troops, and the *iturgu-boila*, and the *khan boila kolober*. And the *kavhan* went to the Smolijani. . . .
2. When someone tells the truth, god sees. And when someone lies, god sees that too. The Bulgars did many favors to the Christians, but the Christians forgot them. But god sees.

*Middle Bulgarian
records of persecution of Christians under the pagan rulers*

Sinaxar record of persecution of Byzantine Christians under Krum and Omurtag 28
(Middle Bulgarian translation from the Greek).

This tenth-century account was composed by the Patriarchy in Constantinople to commemorate Christian martyrs. Its Middle Bulgarian adaptation is extant in several late versions and dates from the thirteenth century. Most of the persecutions occurred after the death of Krum. The leading figures were Dokum and Ditseng, either regents or advisors of Omurtag. The target was the Byzantine leadership in the newly conquered territories who served as imperial agents; hence the persecutions might have been more politically than religiously motivated. Scapegoating the Byzantine defectors in Bulgaria at the first defeat suffered by the Bulgars at the hands of the Byzantines immediately after the death of Krum is another explanation. The persecution might have also been ideologically motivated: wars with the Bulgarians under Krum were seen by the Byzantines as religious wars. It is intriguing to see Christian Bulgarians disavowing their pagan past. Edition: Christo Kodov, *Opis na slavjanskite rakopisi v bibliotekata na Balgarskata Akademija na naukite* (Sofia, 1969), 141.

On that day [January 22] we celebrate the memory of the holy martyrs Manuel, George, Peter, Leontius, Sion, Gabriel, John, Leont, Parod, and others, all together 377 persons.

Manuel was cut in two by the sword, because he kept whole the essence of Christ. George and Peter, killed together, were cut down on account of the Mistress of the grace we all share.²² An unspoken striving had Leont, pierced in the tights by a sword that reached his neck. Furthermore, Gabriel and then Sion, true officers who did not fear the sword, then the upright John and Parod. Parod was stoned by the mob, thus was the journey of his life cut short. Fifteenth times twenty of them perished by the sword, and add to these seven times eleven.

²² Mary, Mother of God.

These saints hailed from different localities in the diocese and lived in the city of Hadrian.²³ The Bulgarians, unwise and ignorant about the true life of our Lord Christ entered Macedonia and Ephrace²⁴ and took them over, attacking the very city of Tsarigrad.²⁵ When they came to the city of Hadrian, they put it under siege for three months and captured as many [citizens] as they found there. This happened when the unfortunate Leon the Armenian²⁶ ruled over the Greeks and Krum was commander of the Bulgarian people. This Krum captured forty thousand people, among them the most holy bishop. He had the bishop thrown on the ground and stamped all over the poor wretch. After Krum ended his life in an evil way, Dukum took the power. He too, died in torments. Then Ditseng, a severe and merciless man, became commander of the Bulgarians. He cut up the great churchman Manuel²⁷ in two, cut off his arms at the shoulders, and threw him to the dogs. Wounded by blindness [Ditseng] was then killed by his own [people]. Mertagon²⁸ took power and dealt inhumanly with all Christians who did not forsake Christ. He took the life of others, torturing them with ropes and chains. He had the holy churchmen George of Deultum and Bishop Peter, who professed [their faith in] Christ our God and persisted in keeping with Christ's pious injunctions beaten with rods in an inhuman and beastly way and their saintly heads cut off by the sword. And a great many people, three hundred and seventy seven in number, he condemned to be put to the sword. The officers John and Leont were cut down with the sword. He had Leont, the saintly eunuch and bishop of Nicea, pierced with a sword through the tights. And Parod, the holy priest, condemned to stoning. Many others, after subjecting them to different tortures, he had put to death. Indeed, not only the wicked Mertagon but the other rulers as well who inherited the rule over the Bulgarians put to torture and death many Christians thus soliciting for them eternal life.

²³ Adrianopolis, today Edirne in Turkey.

²⁴ Both portions of Byzantine Thrace.

²⁵ Traditional Bulgarian name for Constantinople, "the city of the tsar."

²⁶ Emperor Leo V (813–820).

²⁷ The bishop who, according to the Byzantine tradition, might have organized the defense of Adrianopolis.

²⁸ Khan Omurtag.

Short narrative of the persecution, Middle Bulgarian translation from the Greek. 29
 This account is preserved in the scribe Stanislav's *Prologue* from 1330, a collection of short *Lives* of Orthodox saints. Edition: Vasilii Lamanski, *O nekotarih slavjanskijh rukopisjah v Belgrade, Zagrebe, i Vene* (St Petersburg, 1864), 109–110.

On that day [January 22 we commemorate] the heroic deeds of the saintly Manuel, George, Leon and others whom the godless Bulgarians killed with them in the reign of Leon the Armenian.

In the reign of Leon, who was from Armenia, the Bulgarian prince Krum took the field with a large army, went against the Frankish city of Odrin,²⁹ and took according to the laws of war. Along with the city in his hands fell its bishop Manuel. First, he cut off his arms from the shoulders; then he cut him up with the sword and threw him to the beasts to feed upon him. For that sin he lost his sight and the Bulgarians strangled him with a rope.³⁰ Then the power over the Bulgarians went to the godless Tsok. He gathered together all Christians, picked their military officers, priests and deacons, and [prominent] lay persons, and forced them to forsake Christianity, for at that time the Bulgarians were not yet Christian. And because they did not submit, he had some beheaded and others tortured and mercilessly murdered. Lord, hearken to our prayers and have mercy on them!

Legislation

Farmers Law, 9th–10th Century, Old Bulgarian version. 30

The *Farmers Law* reflects the influence of traditional Slavic custom on Byzantine agrarian legislation and the changed conditions in the territories settled by Slavs under Byzantine rule, which soon became part of the Bulgarian state. The *Law* was most likely composed in the eighth century. The Old Bulgarian translation of the Byzantine Greek original dates from the late ninth or early tenth century. Edition of the Byzantine text: W. Ashburner, "The Farmers Law," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 30 (1910), 85–108; Old Bulgarian Slavic translation: A. C. Pavlov, "Knigi zakonnjie," in *Sbornik otdelenija ruskogo jazika i slovesnosti Imperatorskij Akademij Nauk* (St. Petersburg, 1885).

1. The farmer who tills his field has to be equitable and ought not to encroach on the furrow of his neighbor. If someone plows over the boundary line and thus diminishes the plot of his neighbor, and

²⁹ Indication that the account was written while Adrianopolis was within the confines of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, most likely 1207–1230.

³⁰ This applies to one of Krum's successors, regents or advisors of Omurtag.

does this during the plowing season, he forfeits his labor. If he does it during the sowing season, the farmer who did the offence forfeits his seeds, his labor, and the harvest.

2. If a farmer enters another person's plot without his knowledge and plows or sows, he will not get anything for his labor in plowing and sowing, and will have no right to the harvest.
3. When two farmers agree between themselves in front of two or three witnesses to trade their lands for ever, their decision is legal, permanent, and irrevocable.
4. When two farmers agree to trade their lands during the sowing season and one party changes their mind afterwards, if the seed has been planted, the agreement stands; if they had not yet sown, the agreement can be reversed. If the party that breaks the agreement has not yet plowed, and the other party has, let the party that gave up the agreement do the plowing as well.
5. If two farmers agree to exchange their lands, be it for a time or permanently, and it turns out that one of the plots is smaller than the other, and that was not in the agreement, then let the farmer who gets the larger land give to the one with the smaller plot an appropriate piece of land. But if they so agreed [to the unequal exchange] nothing more should be given.
6. If a farmer opens litigation and enters a field without the knowledge of the one who sowed and harvests it, if his claim is found just, he should get none of the grain. If he loses the litigation, he is to return [to the owner] doubly the harvested grain.
7. If there was a division and a party is wronged either by the casting of the die, or by the plots [received], they have the right to deny the validity of the division.
8. If a farmer-*mortrit*³¹ harvests without the knowledge of the owner and carries away the sheaves, let him be, like a thief, deprived of his entire harvest.
9. The *mortrit* is due nine sheaves, the owner one sheaf. Whoever presumes to divide differently let him be cursed by God.
10. If someone agrees with an impoverished farmer to plow his land, they should keep to the agreement until harvest time. If they agreed that he should sow it as well, they should keep to what they had agreed.

³¹ Share-cropper.

11. If a farmer rents a vineyard from an impoverished farmer, but does not cut it as he should, does not work it once and twice, and does not put poles [on the vines] he should get none of the fruit.
12. If a farmer rents a field and, when the season comes, does not plow and sow, but just throws some seeds for the sake of appearances, he should get none of the harvest, for he deceived and swindled the owner of the field.
13. If someone rents the field of an impoverished farmer who fled the land, but gives up tilling it, he should give two times the yield of the land.
14. If someone rents a field and then gives up before the tilling season and tells the owner of the land that he cannot work it, and the owner of the land pays no attention, then the renter should not be punished.
15. If a farmer accepts to work a vineyard or a field under an agreement with the owner and after taking a gage begins work, but then gives up and abandons the land, he should give appropriate compensation and the owner can take his field back.
16. If a farmer takes for cultivation the land of another overgrown with trees, let him collect the fruit of the land for three years before returning it to the owner.
17. If a farmer does not have the means to work his own vineyard and flees to a foreign land then let those responsible for the state taxes gather the grapes without owning anything to the owner, should he come back.
18. If a farmer leaves his own field let those who use and cultivate that field pay to the state the extraordinary taxes. [In case they do not] let them give [him] double the amount.
19. Whoever cuts down the forest of another without the owner's permission and tills and sows the land should get none of the product.
20. If a farmer builds a house and plants a vineyard in the plot belonging to another and after a while the owners come back the latter have no right to demolish the house or uproot the vineyard, but they are entitled to receive a comparable plot. If the one who built the house and planted the vineyard on the plot of another firmly refuses to give them a comparable plot then the owners have the right to uproot the vineyard and demolish the house.
21. If a farmer steals a spade or a pick in the season of hoeing, and it becomes known later, he should give twelve *folis* for every day.

- [The] same [applies] if he stole a pruning knife during the pruning season or a sickle at harvest time or an axe during the felling season.
22. If a herdsman takes in his herd an ox from a farmer early in the morning and the ox gets later strangled by a wolf, let the herdsman show the body to the owner and be free of punishment himself.
 23. If the herdsman who has taken the ox loses it and does not report to the owner the same day [saying]: “Up to that point I was tracking the ox, and what happened afterwards I cannot say,” he should not be left unpunished. But if he reports, he should not be punished.
 24. If the herdsman takes a farmer’s ox early in the morning and goes his way, and the ox leaves the herd and enters fields and vineyards, the herdsman should not be deprived of his payment, but let him pay for the damage.
 25. If the herdsman takes a farmer’s ox in the morning and the ox vanishes, let him take an oath in the Lord’s name that he did nothing wrong and had nothing to do with the ox’s disappearance, and he should not be punished.
 26. If the herdsman takes a farmer’s ox in the morning and the ox gets blinded or lame, the herdsman should take an oath that he did not harm the ox and he should not be punished.
 27. If an ox gets killed, blinded, or maimed, and the herdsman takes an oath that he is innocent and is later exposed by reputable witnesses to have taken a false oath, let his tongue be cut off and let him pay the owner for the damage.
 28. If the herdsman kills, maims, or blinds an ox with a stick in his hand, he is guilty and should be punished. If he throws a stone, he is innocent.
 29. If someone cuts off the bell of an ox or a sheep and is exposed as a thief, let him be flogged with a whip. And if the animal gets lost, let the one who stole the bell give [another animal to the owner].
 30. If there is a tree in a field and the lot next to it is a garden and the tree’s shade falls on the garden, let the owner of the tree prune it. But if the adjacent lot is not a garden, the tree needs not be pruned.
 31. If someone planted a tree on a common land and later, when division is enacted, it happens to fall into the share of another, only the person who planted the tree has a right to it. If the owner of the lot complains that the tree causes damage let him give to the person who planted it another three, and acquire ownership of the one in his lot.

32. If the keeper of fruit [in an orchard] gets caught eating from the lot he is supposed to guard, let him lose his pay and get a good beating.
33. If a hired shepherd gets caught secretly milking the sheep of others and selling their milk, let him be beaten and deprived of his pay.
34. If anyone gets caught stealing someone else's straw, he should return twice as much.
35. If someone takes an ox, an ass, or any other beast without the owner's knowledge and puts it to work, let him pay double hire. If the beast dies on the road let him return two beasts like the one [he has taken].
36. If someone takes an ox for work and the ox dies, let the arbiters look into the matter. If the ox died while used for what it has been taken to do, the person who took it should not be punished. If [the ox] died while doing something else let [the person who took it] give back a healthy ox.
37. If someone finds an ox causing damage in a field or vineyard or some other place and does not bring it to its owner to ask for compensation for the damage, but kills or cripples it, let him give an ox for an ox, an ass for an ass, or a sheep for a sheep.
38. If someone who fells trees in the forest is careless and a tree falls and kills an ox, an ass, or any other animal, let him give an animal for an animal.
39. If someone chops down wood and, being careless, throws his ax from above and kills someone else's animal, let him give the same kind of animal.
40. If someone steals an ox or an ass and gets caught, let him be beaten and return two animals for one, as well as everything that animal has done.
41. If someone wants to steal an ox from a herd and the herd gets lost and eaten by wild beasts, let him be blinded.
42. If someone goes out and drives his animal home, driving someone else's beast along, but does not bring that one together with his own, and it dies or gets eaten by wolves, let him give to the owner of the beast a comparable ox or ass. However, if he sends for the owner, shows him the place where he lost the animal, and explains that he was not able to stop it, he should not be punished.
43. If someone goes out in the forest, finds an ox, kills it, and takes its meat, his hands should be cut off.
44. If a slave slaughters an ox, an ass, or a ram in the forest, let the [slave's] master restore the [same] animal [to the owner].

45. If a slave plans to steal in the night and scares the sheep in the shed and they get lost and eaten by wild beasts, he should be hanged like a murderer.
46. If someone's slave often steals small animals or takes them from their herds in the dark, his master is responsible for the damages, for he must have known. Let the slave himself be hanged.
47. If someone finds an ox that causes damages and does not return it to its owner to claim compensation but cuts off its ears and tail, or blinds it, the owner should not accept it but should be given another beast instead.
48. If someone finds a pig, a sheep, or a dog causing damage, the first time he should return the animal to the owner. On the second occasion let him warn the owner, and on the third occasion he [can] cut off its tail or its ear or kill it with impunity.
49. If an ox or an ass, attempting to enter a vineyard or a garden, falls in the vineyard's or garden's ditch, the vineyard's or garden's owner should not be punished.
50. If an ox or an ass, attempting to enter a vineyard or a garden, impales itself on the fence's posts and dies, the garden's and vineyard's owner should not be punished.
51. If someone sets a trap during harvest time and a dog or a pig gets caught in it and dies, the owner of the trap should not be punished.
52. If someone kills [an animal] when it causes damage for the first or second time instead of returning it to its owner to claim compensation, let him give the same kind of animal he killed.
53. If someone locks up a pig or a dog and it dies, let him pay double.
54. If someone kills a shepherd's dog and does not admit, and wild beasts attack the shed and then it becomes known that he killed the dog, let him restore the flock and the price of the dog.
55. If someone sets fire in his own forests and field and the fire spreads and burns down houses and fields with uncollected harvest, let him not be sentenced, except if he did it when there was a strong wind.
56. Whoever burns someone else's lot and cuts down someone else's trees should be sentenced to pay double.
57. Whoever burns down the fence of a vineyard let him be beaten and his arm branded, and let him pay double the damage.
58. Whoever cuts down someone else's vines with the grapes on them or uproots them let his hand be cut off and let him be fined.

59. Whoever enters someone else's field at harvest time and pilfers sheaves or ears of wheat or gruel let them be stripped of clothes and flogged.
60. Those who enter someone else's vineyards or fig orchards to have a bite only ought not to be punished. But if they entered to steal [and take away] let them be stripped of their clothes and flogged.
61. Let those who steal a plow, a plowshare, a yoke and something of the sort be fined twelve *folis* per day from the day of the theft.
62. Let those who steal and burn someone else's cart pay double.
63. Let those who set fire to the threshing-floor or to stacks of sheaves to avenge themselves on their enemies be burned at the stake.
64. Let those who set fire to a barn or hayloft get their hands cut off.
65. Let those who destroy without permission someone else's house or take down someone else's fence to build their fence or structure have their hands cut off.
66. If someone rented a field with interest and it turned out that they used the field for more than seven years, the judge should postulate that the entire yearly income after the seventh year and half of the income before that should be counted toward the principal [owned].
67. Those caught stealing grain from the granary for the first time, give them a hundred strokes with a stick and let them pay back the damage to the owner. If caught a second time they should pay double. At the third time blind them.
68. If someone sets fire to his own harvested field and the fire spreads and burns down someone else's field or vineyard, the judge should investigate. If the fire spread because of lack of skill and prudence of the one who caused it, and he did not try to prevent it from spreading with any means possible, he should be brought to trial, for he has been negligent and heedless. However, if he took all precautions, but a sudden wind carried the blaze to the field of the one who suffered damage then the one who started the fire should not be punished.
69. Whoever steals wine at night from a jar, a cask, or a barrel should be punished as in the chapter above [i.e., chapter 61].
70. Those who use a partial measure for grain or wine and do not follow the old custom of our fathers but for shameless gain use illegal measures instead of the established ones should be beaten as apostates.

71. If someone gives cattle to a slave to graze without the knowledge of the slave's master, and the slave sells it or otherwise kills it, neither the slave nor the slave's master should be punished.
72. If a slave snatches small animals with the knowledge of his master and eats them or kills them, the slave's master should compensate the owner of the animals.
73. If some someone walks down the road and finds a wounded or killed animal and, seized by pity, reports it to the owner and the latter suspects him of having committed the offence, the one who reports the animal should swear [that he is not guilty for the wounding] and no one should be held responsible for the kill.
74. Whoever kills someone else's animal for whatever reason and gets caught should compensate the owner.
75. Whoever kills a shepherd's dog with poison should be whipped a hundred times and should pay to the owner double the price of the dog. If the flock perishes, he should compensate the owner in full, for he has been the reason for that by killing the dog. Inquiry should be made about the dog as well. If it has been a wild beast-fighter, let it be as we postulated. If it was just a regular, average dog, [the dog-killer] should only be beaten and pay the price of the dog.
76. If two dogs fight and the owner of one of them hits the other with a knife, stick, or a rock, and it gets blinded or dies, or injured in other ways, he should he whipped twelve times and should give compensation to the owner of the other dog for the damage.
77. If someone owns a vicious dog that attacks his neighbors' dogs and incites that dog against weaker dogs and some of the latter gets maimed or dies, let him compensate the owner and be whipped twelve times.
78. If someone lets his beasts on his harvested fields while his neighbors have not yet harvested theirs, and the animals cause damage to his neighbors' fields, let him compensate those who suffered the damage and be whipped thirty times.
79. If someone picks his grapes before other lots have been harvested and lets his animals graze in the vineyards he should pay compensation and be whipped thirty times.
80. Whoever has litigation going on with someone else and cuts down the latter's vines or any other tree without permission should have his hands cut off.
81. If a villager spots a place in the commons that is suitable for a mill and occupies it and builds the mill and then the village commune

- accuses him that he has appropriated common land let them pay him all the expenses and the commune become owners in common of whatever has been build.
82. If a village's land gets divided and someone finds on his lot a place suitable for the building of a mill and builds it other farmers have no right of objection.
 83. If the water that powers the mill devastates fields and vineyards the owner of the mill should take care to protect them. If he cannot, the mill should be shut down.
 84. If the owners of the fields do not want the water [for the mill] to flow through their fields, they have the right [not to allow it to].
 85. If a farmer comes across someone else's ox in someone else's vineyard causing damage and does not inform the owner but, trying to chase it away, kills, or maims, or pierces it with a stake, he should pay full compensation.

Laws of Khan Krum, Byzantine Greek rendition in the Lexicon of Suidas. 31
 The *Lexicon of Suidas* is a tenth-century Byzantine encyclopedia containing entries about the pagan Bulgars, among them a synopsis of Krum's legislation, fragments of which are preserved in an Old Bulgarian translation as well. The laws, if authentic, reflect the state's efforts to address the problems of social differentiation following the settlement of the Bulgars. Edition: A. Adler, *Suidae Lexicon*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1928), 483–4.

Bulgars. The Bulgars liked the dress fashion of the Avars, so they adopted their clothes and still go around dressed like that. In the time of Emperor Justinian with the cut-off nose³² the leader of the Bulgars Tervel was at the height of his fortunes. Justinian himself and Constantine, Heraclius' son paid tribute to him. He [Tervel] used to put his war shield upside down alongside his horse's whip, and cover both with coins. He would stick his spear into the ground and heap silk robes up to its height. He would fill boxes with gold and silver coins and give them away to his soldiers, spending gold with the right hand and silver with left. The same Bulgars annihilated the Avars completely.³³ Krum asked the captured Avars: "What caused the ruin of your leader and your entire nation?" And they answered: "It is all because mutual accusations multiplied and the bold and the clever perished; because

³² Justinian II (685–695, 705–711).

³³ Reference to the Bulgar expansion northwest to Pannonia in the early ninth century, which in conjunction with the advances of the Franks put an end to the Avar khaganate.

the violent and the thieves became cronies with the judges; and because of drunkenness for, as there was more wine, everyone took to drinking; and because of corruption, and because of trade. All and sundry became merchants and began swindling each other. This is the cause of our ruin.” As [Krum] heard this, he called all Bulgarians together and issued the following laws: If someone accuses someone else, [the accuser] should first be tied up and questioned. If it turns out that he is slandering and lying he should be killed. Food should not be given to thieves. If someone dares do that, everything he owns should be seized. He also ordered that the legs of thieves should be broken and all vineyards should be uprooted. Beggars should be given enough to prevent them from falling again into destitution; and whoever does not do that, his possessions should be seized. As it was already reported, the Bulgars annihilated all of the Avars.

Traditional culture

32 *Pope Nicholas I's answers to the questions of the Bulgarians, 866.*

Desiring the independence of the newly established Bulgarian Church, in 866 Prince Boris opened negotiations with Rome. A Bulgar embassy approached Nicholas I with a list of questions addressing how the Catholic faith would affect Bulgar ancestral customs and socio-political arrangements. Nicholas I's extensive reply was handed to the embassy on November 13, 866. The questions of the Bulgars are not extant, but in the answers composed by the librarian Anasthasius on the orders of the pope they are reiterated or summarized. The excerpts here are the answers that contain the indirect speech of the envoys. Edition: Dimiter Dechev, ed., *Nicolaus I Papa, Responsa ad consulta Bulgarorum (anno 866)* (Sofia, 1939).

It is not necessary to provide lengthy answers to your inquiries, and we do not plan to dwell on each and everyone of them because, with God's help, we plan to send to your motherland and to your glorious prince, our beloved son, not only books with the divine law, but our worthy messengers as well, who will instruct you in any particulars according to the specifics of the time and the affair; we do entrust them with the books that we believe you need right now.

Article 1. It is laudable and very good that you first state in your inquiries that your prince wishes to have the Christian law...

Article 13. In your questions and queries you state that you need secular laws. We would have gladly sent you books that we think you might

need at this point, if we knew for sure that there is someone among you who could explain them [to you]. But if we were to give our envoys books of secular law we would not like them to remain [with you] after our envoys depart, because someone could misinterpret them or pollute them with deceit.

Article 14. Besides, you inform us that a certain Greek falsely claimed to be a presbyter while in fact he was not, and he baptized many in your land. As you found by God's inspiration that he was not a presbyter you sentenced him to lose his ears and nose, and to be severely beaten and chased out of your land.

Article 15. Furthermore you ask whether those who had been baptized by that man are Christian and whether they need to be baptized again. But if they had been baptized in the name of the supreme and undivided Trinity, they are truly Christian and it is not proper to baptize them again, regardless of who baptized them.

Article 17. And so, you tell us how with God's mercy you accepted the Christian faith and how you made all your people convert, but how after they converted they rose unanimously against you with great hatred arguing that you gave them no good law and they wanted to kill you and install another prince, and how you, fortified with God's power, overcame them and captured them all with your own hands, ordinary people and magnates, and how all the leaders and nobles were put to the sword with all their kin, and the less noble and the not so distinguished suffered no harm, and you wish to know if, on account of those who lost their lives, you had committed a sin. Indeed, this could not have been done without sin and without guilt on your part, since you had the younger generation, which had not shared in the plans of their parents and did not rise in arms against you slaughtered, the innocent perishing alongside the guilty. But because you sinned on account of your zeal for Christianity or out of ignorance rather than vice, you shall receive absolution and grace by Christ's mercy as soon as you do penance.

Article 18. You state that you want to know what is to be done with apostates from the Christian law. If they do not obey the one who they had taken as their mentor, let the church know. Furthermore, if they do not obey the church, let them truly be considered "ethnic," that is, pagan, and let them then be subjected to pressure by the secular powers like aliens.

Article 19. You will find be taught by the holy laws that we will send with our message what is the proper way to deal with those who rose to kill your prince.

Article 20. [You ask] What would be the sentence of a free man who fled from his country and got caught? Nothing but what the law prescribes.³⁴

Article 21. If a slave runs away from his master and gets caught, he should be forgiven; but, in general, one should not break the law on his account.

Article 22. As for those who turn back and run when you enter battle with your enemies, if commiseration and mercy have no place, at least you could mitigate the severity of the law.

Article 23. We advise the same for those who refuse to follow orders when ordered to engage the enemy.

Article 25. You say that it is the custom of your country that there are always guards on the frontiers between your land and that of others; and that if a slave or a free person somehow manages to get through the guards and escapes the guards are put to death in his stead.

Article 33. You say that your battle standard thus far has been a horse tail.

Article 34. Besides, you ask if you are expected to set off immediately after the news comes that you have to go to war, or there are certain times when you should not fight.

Article 35. You tell us that you are accustomed to observe certain days and hours when you prepare for war, and cast spells, perform games, sing, and try to foretell [its outcome].

Article 40. You declare that it is the custom of your country that before battle a loyal and upright man is sent by your lord, who checks the weapons, appurtenances, and horses used in battle, and if he finds a negligent man, punishes him with death.

Article 41. As for those who refuse to accept the goodness of Christianity and sacrifice to idols and fall on their knees before them, we

³⁴ The Bulgar law, that is, death penalty.

cannot write anything else except that you should persuade them [to accept] the true faith.

Article 42. You state that when your prince sits at the table to eat according to custom no one sits next to him, even his wife, but all of you sit on low chairs at a distance from him and eat on the ground.

Article 44. There is no reason to indulge in hunting during the Quadregesima.

Article 45. You wish to find out from us whether during the Quadregesima trial could be held and death sentences passed.

Article 46. Whether during the Quadregesima it is permitted, if need be or if there be no need, to go to war is not necessary to discuss any longer.

Article 47. You ask whether it is permitted to stage games during the Quadregesima.

Article 48. That is why we think that during the Quadregesima it is not permitted either to wed or to have feasts.

Article 49. Besides this, you wish to know whether you are allowed to give as a dowry to your wives gold, silver, oxen, horses, etc.

Article 51. You ask if it is permitted to have two wives at the same time and if it is not permitted, you wish to know what are you supposed to do with those found out [to have two wives].

Article 52. If you wish to know what is to be done with those who castrate someone, open the pages of the law.

Article 55. As for your statement that the Greeks forbid the taking of communion without belts, we really do not know on what grounds they affirm that.

Article 56. You are assuring us that you wish to know whether in time of draught it is permitted to all of you to order fasting and stage prayers.

Article 58. [You wish to know] If a woman should cover her head in church or if she can stay uncovered.

Article 59. What you ask about pants we believe is not necessary.

Article 62. You tells us that before you converted to Christianity a rock was found which, if someone partook of it on account of some illness sometime it healed him, sometime it did not.

Article 63. You ask as well whether during the night and day of our Lord the husband is permitted to get together or lay with his wife.

Article 64. How many days the husband should abstain after his wife gives birth to a son?

Article 66. You affirm that the Greeks forbid you to enter church with a head bandana made of linen cloth.

Article 67. You state that when you wish to bind someone by oath it is your custom to put a sword before you and swear in the sword.

Article 72. You ask whether it is permissible to install a patriarch for you. We cannot answer anything specific before our envoys that we are sending along with you come back and inform us about the numbers and unanimity of the Christians among you. Still, for the time being you have to have a bishop. Later, as God's grace multiplies among you, Christianity expands, and bishops are installed in separate churches, one of them should be chosen and called, if not patriarch, at least archbishop, so that they can address themselves to him and seek his advice in important cases.

Article 73. You, however, ask who has the authority to install a patriarch. Know, therefore, that in a place where there has never been a patriarch or an archbishop before, he has to be installed by his superior.

Article 75. The rule for penance you want our bishops, whom we sent to your land, will bring to you together with the other books, or the bishop who will be installed for you will deliver it to you.

Article 78. You relate that the people who rose against you to kill you wished to repent, but the foreign clerics among you refused to accept them. Now you ask what is to be done with them.

Article 79. Stating that it is your custom that those suffering by an affliction take a certain necklace and wear it on their neck, you ask whether we permit that to be done.

Article 80. You ask how to conclude a peace with a people that wishes to be in peace with you.

Article 83. You ask if you are permitted to try someone on account of capital crimes.

Article 84. You think that you should ask us what would be the sentence if someone accuses someone else and it turns out the accusation has been false.

Article 85. As for your question what to do with those who would give a man a deadly potion, we urge you to be merciful.

Article 86. You state that if a thief or a bandit gets caught and denies the charges, your judge beats him over the head with a whip and another pierces his ribs with iron spikes until the truth is discovered.

Article 88. It is not permitted to pray for parents who died non-believers.

Article 89. The ancients too, had the custom to dedicate the new fruit and the first born.

Article 90. You ask whether it is permitted to eat animals or birds killed not by the knife but expired from the stroke of a man.

Article 92. You want to know the number of true patriarchs. True patriarchs should be considered those who sit on apostolic thrones as descendants of the first priests, that is, those who are heads of the churches which have been proven to have been established by the apostles. Namely, [these are] the Roman church, which was established with the preaching of the chief apostles Peter and Paul and sanctified with their own blood shed for their love for Christ; the Alexandrian, which was established by the evangelist Mark, a disciple and son in baptism of Peter, sent to do that by Peter himself and which he himself dedicated to God with his blood; and that of Antioch, where the saints called a large council at which the believing Christians were declared for the first time: it was governed for a few years by the blessed Peter before he came to Rome. The heads of Constantinople and Jerusalem, even though called patriarchs, are not as important as the above mentioned. For the church of Constantinople was not established by the apostles and the Council of Nicaea, the holiest and most distinguished of all councils, does not mention it at all; it is only because Constantinople was called the New Rome that its high priest was named a patriarch with the blessing of lords rather than for any good reason. The head of Jerusalem too, even though he calls himself a patriarch and deserves

respect according to the old custom and the Council of Nicaea, still, without infringing on the dignity of his diocese, that same great and holy Council deliberately does not call him patriarch but bishop of Elia.³⁵

Article 93. Furthermore, you ask which one of the patriarchs is second after that of Rome. According to what the holy Roman church maintains, the canons of Nicaea confirm, and common sense teaches, the patriarch of Alexandria is second after Rome.

Article 94. You state that the Greeks say that it is in their land that the chrism is born and from there it is spread all over the world and you want to know if that is correct. We believe that your prudence helped you figure out how wrong that is.

Article 96. Whatever your wife thinks or does about you, even if she falsely accuses you, you should not cast her away, except in case of adultery, nor should you hate her.

Article 97. The same applies to the slave who accuses his master before the magnates.

Article 98. You ask whether suicides should be buried and whether sacrifices should be offered for them.

Article 100. [You ask] Whether those who fall in battle should be carried back to their own land by their comrades should they wish so.

Article 101. You ask to whom alms should be given.

Article 103. You ask what should be done with the impious books that you received from the Saracens and that are still found among you.

Article 104. You assert that many in your land have been baptized by a certain Jew, of whom you do not know whether he is a Christian or a pagan, and you wish to know what to do with them.

Article 106. Finally, you beg us on your knees to give you, as we did to other tribes, true and perfect Christianity without spot and blemish, and you assert that Christians from many places have come to your land, that is, Greeks, Armenians, and from other places, and are saying all sorts of different things as they please. For this reason you ask us to tell you definitely whether you should obey all those preachers

³⁵ The Roman name of Jerusalem.

with all their different positions, or whether you should do something else. . . . And now, inspired by the divinity, we send to your land envoys carrying our message and diverse books, and we will not cease watering you until you grow strong roots of your own.

This is what we are able to respond to your inquiries and questions, as God inspired us, not as much as we could, but as much as we decided was enough. And when with God's grace you acquire from us a bishop he will teach you all that pertains to his position, and if there is something that he would not know, he will learn it from the apostolic throne. Let God, who revealed in you the great feat of salvation, complete it, confirm it, strengthen it, and reinforce it to the end. Amen.

Vestiges of pagan belief after the conversion.

33

This short list was compiled most likely in the late ninth or early tenth century and is preserved in Russian redactions from the thirteenth century in a collection of sermons by St Gregory (St Petersburg, State Public Library, Manuscript Department, MS F. π. I. 16).

1. A man arranges a mass for his well and pleads for rain forgetting that it is God in Heaven who sends down rain. 2. Another does not relate to the true God and angers Him who has created heaven and earth. 3. Some call the river goddess and the beast that lives in it god and sings a mass for them. 4. Some worship Zeus, other the wild one, and yet another worships hail. 5. Someone plants a cornel-three in a public place and swears by it. 6. Someone believes in avian auguries. 7. Another doubts the Presentation in the Temple. 8. Another swears in human bones. 9. Some castrate and kill. 10. Another works on Sundays and holidays, augmenting property, his downfall. For, even though he works the entire week, this one day destroys the rest. 11. Another swears falsely over relics.

PART TWO

CONVERSION, EXPANSION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY,
AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS DURING THE FIRST
BULGARIAN TSARDOM, 864–1018

Seals

Lead seals of Prince Boris-Michael (864–889, 893, + 907).

34

The seals document the newly converted ruler's dedication to Christianity by referring to him by his Christian name only and underscore the territorial concept of the Bulgarian polity as opposed to earlier references to people rather than land. Both the name and the invocation of the Mother of God stress the link to Byzantium. Especially interesting is the last seal, which might be attributed to the time of Michael's brief (and illegitimate) return to power to suppress the pagan reaction under his son Rasate and re-establish Christianity and the pro-Byzantine orientation of Bulgaria by putting his younger son Simeon on the Bulgarian throne. Editions: Nikola Mushmov, *Monetite i pečatite na Balgarskite tsare* (Sofia, 1924), 157; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 31–36.

(r) + Christ help your servant Michael ruler of Bulgaria.

(v) + Mother of God help your servant Michael ruler of Bulgaria.

(r) + Mother of God help Michael ruler of Bulgaria.

(v) + Lord God help Michael, ruler of Bulgaria.

(r) ΘΚΕΡΟΗΘΤωCω

(v) Mother of God help your servant Michael the monk, from God ruler of Bulgaria.

Seals of Tsar Simeon (893–927).

35

The seals reflect the progressive growth of Simeon's political aspirations within the framework of the Byzantine political theology, from a prince and a ruler of a friendly country technically acknowledging Byzantine overarching authority, to emperor (*basileus* or *tsar*), to emperor of the "Roman" Empire, to guardian of the universal peace. Edition: *PI*, 330, 332 (#88–90); Jordanov, *Korpus*, 40–54.

(v) + Mother of God help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.

(r) + Lord God help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.

(v) + Mother of God help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.

(r) + Christ help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.

- (v) + Simeon *basileus*.
- (r) + Mother of God (image).
- (v) + Simeon, in Christ *basileus* of the *Romaioi*.
- (r) To the *basileus* established by God many years.
- (v) + Simeon *basileus* to live many years.
- (r) + Many years to the peacemaker *basileus*.
- (v) Jesus Christ King of Kings.
- (r) Simeon *basileus*.

36 *Lead seals of Tsar Peter and his spouse Maria.*

Tsar Simeon's universal claims were not accepted as legitimate by Byzantium, but the political sovereignty of his heir, Peter (927–969), was acknowledged in a compromise that left him with the title of *basileus* of the Bulgarians, a return to a non-territorial definition of his authority. The legitimacy of the title was buttressed by his marriage to the Byzantine princess Maria Lakapena (911–962). She appears on his official seals of which a large number (about 50 so far) have been found in a Preslav workshop. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 58–63.

- (v) + (Image of Christ).
- (r) + Peter despot.
- (v) + Peter *basileus* of the Bulgarians.
- (r) + (Image of Jesus Christ).
- (v) Peter, pious *basileus*.
- (r) + Jesus Christ.
- (v) + Peter and Maria *basilei* of Bulgaria.
- (r) + Jesus Christ.
- (v) Peter and Maria in Christ autocrats of the Bulgarians.
- (r) + Jesus Christ.
- (v) Peter and Maria in Christ august autocrats and *basilei*.
- (r) + Jesus Christ.
- (v) Peter tsar of the Bulgarians (matrix of an official state seal).

37 *Seal of Ioan bagatur, tenth century.*

The seal records two titles of a high-ranking Bulgarian; their exact meaning and hence his position in the hierarchy of the Bulgarian court is still unclear. Ioan could have been a *bagatur* in service of the heir presumed, the *kanartikin*,

or the *kanartikin* himself bore a second title, *bagatur* (the “hero”), recorded also in Bulgarian military inventory inscriptions. If Ioan was the *kanartikin*, he might have been Simeon’s second son who revolted against his father and lost out in the struggle. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 69–71.

+ Lord help your servant Ioan *bagatur kanairthin*.

Seal of Michael bagatur, tenth century.

38

The legend on the seal mirrors that of Ioan *bagatur*. By the same logic, Michael might have been Simeon’s eldest son, who also attempted to take power before his time and lost out. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 73–4.

+ Lord help your servant Michael *bagatur kanairthin*

Lead seal of unknown official, tenth century.

39

Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 74–5, 157

+ Lord help your servant...*bagatur* of the *basileus* of the Bulgarians

Lead seal of the sinkel and monk George, ninth or tenth century, Preslav.

40

Up to the tenth century *sinkel* in Byzantium was a very high position, the title meaning advisor, secretary, or vicar of the patriarch appointed by the emperor as a liaison between church and court. By the late tenth century the title devolved. There were several *sinkels*, some of them in service of the provincial metropolitan bishops. The seal of this highly placed member of the Bulgarian church documents the rapid establishment of ecclesiastical administration in Bulgaria after the conversion. Editions: Todor Gerasimov, “Tri starobalgarski molivdovula,” *Izvestija na Archeologičeskija Institut*, 8 (1934), 356; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 81–84.

(v) + Lord help your servant.

(r) George monk and *sinkel* of (in?) Bulgaria.

Lead seal of George, Archbishop of Bulgaria, ninth or tenth centuries.

41

This otherwise unknown Bulgarian archbishop might well have been the former *sinkel* George (see above). Several of his seals have been found, most recently in Zalavar, Hungary. Editions: Vitalien Laurent, *Le corpus de sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1965), #1491; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 79–81; idem, “Pechat na Pliskovskija archiepiskop na Balgaria Georgi nameren v Zalavar, Ungaria,” in *Cultural Texts of the Past: Mediators, Symbols, and Ideas*. Vol. 1. *Texts of History, History of Texts* (Sofia: Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2003), 160–63.

(v) + Mother of God, help your servant.

(r) + George archbishop of Bulgaria.

- 42 *Lead seal of Isaiah, bishop of (in?) Bulgaria (864–866).*
Isaiah might well have been the first chief prelate of the newly converted country. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 78–9.
- + Lord help Isaiah bishop of Bulgaria.

Stone Annals and Inscriptions

- 43 *Inscription from the time of Boris-Michael, Balshi (modern Albania, now lost).*
The first part of this inscription dated in 866 was too worn out at the time a copy was made from it during World War I. It has been argued that the beginning referred to the conversion or re-conversion of the Bulgars by the Roman legates in 866. Demetrius Chomatianos, archbishop of Ohrid (1216–1234), mentions in his *Life of St Clement* that even at his time one could see monuments in the region on which there were inscriptions commemorating the conversion. Edition: C. Prashniker, “Zwei mittelalterliche Inschriften aus Albanien,” *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historische Klasse der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien* 56: 13 (Vienna, 1919), 73–76; *BSM*, 12–16.
- [Boris] christened Michael, with the people given to him by God in the year 6374 [866 AD].

- 44 *Latin inscription about the re-dedication of a church, Preslav, 867.*
Prince Boris’s maneuvers between Rome and Constantinople resulted in the arrival of a Latin mission, which promptly proceeded to establish the Roman Church’s custom. This inscription from Preslav documents the re-sanctification of a church according to the Latin rite. The inscription omits Michael’s Byzantium-hinting Christian name, Michael, and refers to him with his pagan name. Edition: Ivan Dujchev, *Medioevo bizantinoslavo* vol. 1 (Rome, 1965), 189.
- + This church was dedicated during the pontificate of Pope Nicholas I of blessed memory, in his tenth year, in the name of the all powerful God and in the presence of Boris, prince of the Bulgarians, with all of his clergy and people.

- 45 *Inscription of the chartophilax (keeper of the records) Paul from the Golden Church of Preslav, tenth century.*
This fragmentary inscription from the most prestigious ecclesiastical structure in Tsar Simeon’s new capital, Preslav, preserves the name and title of another high-ranking cleric, the *chartophilax* Paul. Nothing else is known about him. Editions: Ivan Goshev, *Starobalgarski glagolicheski i kirilski nadpisi* (Sofia, 1965), 85; Kazimir Popkonstantinov and Albina Medintseva, “Ktitorskaja nadpis iz krugloj tserkvi v Preslave,” *Palaebulgarica* 4 (1983) 39–55; *AI*, I, 177.
- ...the church “St Ioan” built...by the *chartophilax* Paul....

Building inscription in the church of Saint Blasius by presbyter John and Thomas, Isbul, northeastern Bulgaria, tenth century. 46

The inscription is the earliest record of a privately built church in northeastern Bulgaria, the heart of the Bulgar settlement. The undertaking was a joint venture of a layman and a cleric and indicates the possibility of “Eigenkirche” type of relations between the secular nobility and the ecclesiastical estate. Edition: Venelina Ivanova, “Starobalgarski nadpis ot Teke Kozludja,” *Izvestija na Archeologicheskija Institut* 7 (1933), 319–21.

+ Lord have mercy on your servant presbyter John and your servant Thomas who built the temple of St Blasius. Amen.

Boundary inscription from 904. 47

This boundary inscription, besides indicating the advance of the Bulgarians toward Thessaloniki in the wake of the Arab capture of the city and Byzantium’s dire conditions, provides extremely important information about the territorial-administrative organization of the Bulgarian state, its officials’ nomenclature, and the control of the central authority over its far-flung dominions. Edition: *PI* 216 (#46).

+ In the year of the creation of the world 6412 [904], seventh *indiction*. Boundary line between Bulgarians and *Romaioi* in the time of Simeon, from God ruler of the Bulgarians, *oglu-tarkan* Theodor, and *comes* Drister.

Inscription of the great zhupan Sivin on silver cup, Preslav, ninth century. 48

Sivin’s title indicates a hierarchy in the class of the *zhupans*, traditionally seen as Slavic chiefs co-opted by the Bulgar state, but his name is Bulgar and hints at a tighter grip on the local leaders than the title would suggest. The proper meaning of the inscription depends on the reading of its second part, especially establishing the correct preposition, and is debatable whether Sivin was *zhupan in Bulgaria* or *of Bulgaria*. Edition: Totju Totev, “Srebarna chasha s nadpis ot Preslav,” *Izvestija na Archeologicheskija Institut*, 29 (1966), 12.

+ Lord help Sivin, great *zhupan* in (of?) Bulgaria.

Tomb inscription of ichurgu boila Mostich, Preslav, tenth century. 49

The inscription records the already mentioned continuation of the Bulgar tradition in administrative nomenclature for a century after the conversion, but the high official with function of interior minister here bears a Slavic name, which indicates an advanced process of assimilation of the Bulgars and the emergence of the Bulgarian nation. The rendering of the title in Old Bulgarian points toward the same transition, capturing language transformations as well. Editions: Stancho Stanchev, “Nadgrobniat nadpis na churgobilja Mostich ot Preslav,” in *Nadpisat na Churgubilja Mostich* (Sofia, 1956), 8. Translation into English: Alexander M. Schenker, *The Dawn of Slavic: An Introduction to Slavic Philology* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 279; *AI*, 1, 185.

+ Here lies Mostich, who was *churgubilja* under Tsar Simeon and Tsar Peter. In the eight decade of his years he gave up the office of *churgubilja* and all his property, became a black-shirt wearer,¹ and so ended his life.

- 50 *Memorial inscription of a monk and archdeacon, nephew of Bishop Nicolas; Tcherven, district of Ruse, 871.*

This inscription from the time of Boris-Michael documents the speedy establishment of bishoprics in the territory of the newly converted country and the name of one of the high ecclesiastics, Bishop Nicolas. Edition: *PI*, 328.

Here rests... monk and archdeacon of Bishop Nicholas, his uncle. He died in the year 6379 [871], fourth *indiction*, on Friday, October 5, in the time of Michael, the glorious and Christ-loving ruler.

- 51 *Inscription of zhupan Dimiter, 943.*

The inscription was found in 1950 at the village of Mirca Voda, presently in Romania. Although its interpretation is difficult due to damage of the slab, it appears to refer to the actions of the local Bulgarian commander or governor to strengthen the defenses of his district in view of the looming threat of a Petcheneg invasion. Editions: D. Bogdan, "Dobrudjanskaja nadpis 943 goda (paleographicheskij i lingvisticheskij ocherk)," *Romanoslavica*, 1 (Bucharest, 1958), 90; *AI*, 1, 109.

[against] the Greeks in the year 6451 [943 AD] by Dimiter... *zhupan*.

- 52 *Memorial inscription of Tsar Samuel (997–1014) for his parents and brother, 993.*

This inscription is remarkable for Samuel's humble demeanor; neither his nor his father's official titles are used. Samuel's mother's name, as well as his own and those of his brothers have been the basis of a hypothesis that the family was of Armenian origins and its head was a Byzantine regional governor in southwestern Bulgaria, rather than provincial administrator for the Bulgarian government in Preslav. The inscription, which can be interpreted only with difficulty as propaganda, has been at the root of the controversy. Whatever the family's origins, the inscription testifies to their cultural and social incorporation in late tenth-century Bulgaria. There is no better witness than the careers and the ethnic self-determination of the two most prominent members of the family, the tsars Samuel and John Vladislav. Edition: *BSM*, 25; *AI*, 37.

+ In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I, Samuel, servant of God, placed this stone in memory of my father, mother, and

¹ I.e., monk.

brother. The names of the deceased are Nikola, servant of God, ... David. This was written in the year of the creation of the world 6501 [993], ... *indiction*.

Inscription of Tsar Ioan Vladislav (1015–1018) from Bitolja, modern Macedonia, dated 1016.

53

This beautifully carved inscription in Cyrillic is wholly in the vein of the Bulgarian stone annalistic and definitively establishes the ethnic belonging of Ioan Vladislav, the last Bulgarian tsar of the First Kingdom before the Byzantine conquest of Bulgaria in 1018. It legitimizes the position of Vladislav, who came to the throne after a bloody coup that eliminated his first cousin and rightful tsar, Gabriel Radomir (1014–1015), by stressing the link to the house of *comes* Nicola and to Samuel, the glorious exploits of his father Aaron, and his own efforts to provide safety and protection for his subjects. The historical part of the inscription mentions the two key battles in the long Bulgarian struggle for independence, the Bulgarian victory over Basil II's forces on August 17, 986 and the crushing defeat of Samuel at the village of Kliutch on July 29, 1014. The inscription records the first use of the Slavic version of the title *autocrator*, *samodrzec*, by a Bulgarian ruler. Edition: Jordan Zaimov and Vasilka Tapkova-Zaimova, *Bitolskijat nadpis na Ivan Vladislav, samodarzec balgarski* (Sofia, 1970), 32–3; *AI*, 1, 15–16.

+ In the year of the creation of the world 6523 [1016] this fortress [Bitolja] built and made by Ioan, *autocrator* of Bulgaria, was restored, with the help and prayers of our holiest Mistress, the Mother of God, and the intercession of the twelve superior apostles. This fortress was built to provide refuge and save Bulgarian lives. This fortress of Bitolja was begun on October 20, and was completed in the month of ..., in the end. This *autocrator* was born Bulgarian, grandson of the devout Nicola and Ripsimia, son of Aaron, the brother of the *autocrator* Samuel. These two defeated in [the pass of] Stipon the Greek army of Tsar Basil² and took gold... and this one in... Samuel Tsar was defeated by Tsar Basil in the year of the creation of the world 6522 [1014] in [the pass of] Kliutch and died in the end of the summer.³

² Reference to the Bulgarian victory over the army of Basil II on August 17, 986 at the Trajan's Gate.

³ Samuel suffered a crushing defeat at Kliutch on July 29, 1014. That summer, at the sight of the thousands of his soldiers blinded on orders of Basil II, the tsar died of grief.

Graffiti and Inscriptions from Ecclesiastical Foundations

- 54 *Stone inscription from Gigen (ancient Oescus on the Danube), tenth century (?)*.
Edition: *AI*, 1, 29.

...whoever reads curse the heretic and if [he] does not curse [the heretic] let [him] be cursed himself. If he curses the heretic the Lord God will have mercy on him....neither....

- 55 *Stone inscription, Krepcha, northwestern Bulgaria, end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century*.
Edition: *AI*, 1, 47.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Here rests the holy father Anthony. And whoever turns this church into grain storage will be responsible before God. Michael the unworthy wrote this.

- 56 *Graffiti from Krepcha, northwestern Bulgaria, tenth-eleventh centuries*.
Edition: *AI*, 1, 57.

I, George the grammarian from the village of Mastovitsa wrote this.

- 57 *Graffiti from Krepcha, northwestern Bulgaria, tenth-eleventh centuries*.
Edition: *AI*, 1, 57.

I,...from the village of ...wrote this.

- 58 *Graffiti from the monastery of Murfatlar, today in Rumania, tenth century*.
Edition: *AI*, 1, 75.

The father came to this place...van in the month of October, on the 15th...and came...in the month of January.

- 59 *Graffiti from Murfatlar, tenth century*.
Edition: *AI*, 1, 77.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The unworthy servant Simeon bowed down in this church for the first time in the month of August, 31st day.

Tomb inscription of Ana, Preslav, tenth century. First part Old Bulgarian second part Greek. 60

Edition: *AI*, 1, 187.

Assumption of Ana servant of God. On the ninth day of the month of October Ana servant of God passed away.

Graffiti by a tenth-century jail bird, Preslav. 61

Edition: Edition: *AI*, 1, 197.

I, the sinful Ian wrote this when sitting in prison.

Graffiti on a drinking cup, Preslav, 931 AD. 62

Edition: *AI*, 1, 205.

May I, Alzek live a hundred years drinking from this cup, year 6439 [931 AD].

Bilingual Greek-Old Bulgarian graffiti from the interior wall of the church of the monastery of Ravna, late ninth or early tenth century. 63

The monastery was founded on April 23, 889, at a convenient 25 km distance from the old capital of Pliska, and was dedicated to the Mother of God. Members of the Bulgarian ruling dynasty were among its denizens. Khan/Prince Boris-Michael is reported to have entered a monastery in that same year. Among other buildings it features a large scriptorium which explains the over 350 graffiti on material of all kind found in the monastery precinct, many of them bilingual in Byzantine Greek and Old Bulgarian. Edition: *AI*, 1, 215.

Klimentos Papa Rome/Kliment Papa

Bilingual Greek-Old Bulgarian graffiti, outer wall of the church of Ravna, tenth century. First half Greek, second Old Bulgarian. 64

Edition: *AI*, 1, 219.

God save Marina. You God help Marina I am telling the truth.

Graffiti on the same wall. 65

Edition: *AI*, 1, 233.

I came on Monday at noon and went to the church and wrote [this].

Graffiti from the fortress of Shumen, northwestern Bulgaria, tenth century. 66

Edition: *AI*, 1, 239.

Ostro bogoin

- 67 *Graffiti on the marble columns of the church of Holy Archangels, village of Varosh, modern Macedonia, 996 AD.*

Edition: *AI*, 1, 244.

In the year 6504 [996 AD] on February 17, died Pope Adrian.

Historical accounts

- 68 *Short historical account of the conversion of the Bulgarians.*

This fourteenth-century composite account derived from Byzantine annals documents the interest that Bulgarians of later times had in the story of their conversion and the twists added to their Byzantine sources. Edition: Alexander Jazimirskiji, "Melkije textji I zametki po starinnoj slavjanskoj i ruskoj literaturij," *Izvestija Otdela po Russkogo Jazyka i Slovesnosti* 7:1 (St Petersburg, 1903), 112.

Here is a brief account of how and in what manner the Bulgarians became Christians. It happened at a time when the Bulgarians and the Greeks frequently waged wars between themselves. The Greeks captured the sister of the Bulgarian prince and kept her in Constantinople, in the palace, teaching her the book,⁴ and then converted her. Then the Bulgarian prince sent to the Greek tsar to ask for her. The tsar let her go. When she came back to her brother she always instructed him in Christianity and he wondered at the Christian rites. Before that the Bulgarian prince had been instructed in Christianity by a certain Kufara. At that time leprosy afflicted the Bulgarians. They got scared and converted, but the deadly disease did not abate, and those dying saw no help forthcoming. The prince was greatly grieved by all this. And then his sister told him about Christ, and he adopted the teaching. The deadly affliction went away. The Bulgarian prince, seeing how with God's help he got healed from the wound, sent a request to Constantine's city for clerics to come and baptize him. When the Bulgarians saw that, those who were not baptized rose against him to kill him. Strengthened by Christ's sign he fought and defeated them. The cross was born before him, so it was. Everyone loved Christianity and they converted. Afterwards their lord sent to Tsarina Theodora, asking land for the Bulgarians from the Romans. Tsarina Theodora fulfilled their wish. She granted them land in the province called *Zhelezni* all the way to Velt.⁵ Velt is close to the city of Odrin. All this the Bulgar-

⁴ I.e., the Scriptures.

⁵ Develt, the Roman Colonia Flavia Pacis Deultensium in southeastern Bulgaria.

ians inherited through the grant of Tsarina Theodora. That province was called *Žagorie*. From then on a long peace with the Bulgarians was established in the western provinces.

Scribal note to the Old Bulgarian translation of Athanasius of Alexandria's Sermons against the Arians, 907. 69

This end note to the Old Bulgarian translation of Athanasius's anti-heretical treatise from c. 360, aside from identifying another of the works of Constantine of Preslav, records the exact date of the passing away of Prince Boris-Michael. The note presents a rare example of combining dates from the Bulgar and Christian calendar; reconciling these two chronologies, however, must have been a problem, for the year 6414 corresponds to the ninth *indiction* and 6415 to the tenth *indiction*. The year *eht behti* corresponds to the year of the dog, the eleventh year, fifth month of the Bulgar calendar. A. Vaillant suggested that the original text has been in Glagolitic; most scholars disagree and insist on a Cyrillic original. Edition: Andre Vaillant, *Discours contre les Ariens de saint Athanase. Version slave et traduction en français* (Sofia, 1954), 6–7.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, overcome!

+ These pious books, called Athanasians, were translated from the Greek into Bulgarian on the request of our Bulgarian Prince Simeon by Bishop Constantine, who was a disciple of Methodius, the archbishop of Moravia, in the year from the beginning of the world 6414 [906], tenth *indiction*. They were written down on the request of the same prince by the monk Theodore Doksov, in the estuary of the river Ticha, in the holy and honorable new golden church of the same prince, in the year 6415 [907], fourteenth *indiction*. That same year, on the second day of the month of May, on a Saturday night, died the servant of God, the father of the prince, who lived with pure faith in the orthodox confession of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, our great, honest, and pious Bulgarian prince Boris whose Christian name is Michael. This Boris converted the Bulgarians in the year 6374 [864] in the year *eht behti*. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

The miracle of St George with the Bulgarian, tenth century. 70

This original work is a precious evidence for the political, religious, and social conditions, and the disastrous Magyar invasions during the early years of Simeon's rule in northeastern Bulgaria where, more than two centuries after the settlement, vestiges of the Bulgars were slow to assimilate. The text is part of a larger collection of Byzantine Greek provenance, the *Narration of the miracles of the great and glorious martyr St George*. It is the first tale in a series of ten miracles performed by the saint through an iron cross made at his

request by the Bulgarian George. The copies of the collection date from the fourteenth century but internal evidence points to a very early, contemporary source. No Greek prototype of the Bulgarian text has been found but there are indications that the text is a translation. Even so, it definitely relates to a Bulgarian context. Edition: Hristo Kodov, *Opis na slavjanskite rakopisi v bibliotekata na Balgarskata Akademija na Naukite* (Sofia, 1969), 143–44; Angelov, *Iz starata literatura*, 3, 84–6.

At that time, a wandering brother came to us. He carried on himself a small cross that performed many miracles. After spending a few days with us he fell sick and sent for me. When I went to the inn where he was laying down, he told me: “Father, bless me and pray to the Lord for me. Take this cross. It has a long story and I doubt I have the strength to tell it; but with God’s help, I will tell it.” Then I called the abbot and three older fathers and after we prayed, he sat up, crossed himself, and told us the following:

Father Abbot Peter: I am from the newly converted Bulgarian people, whom God enlightened through His chosen one, Prince Boris, called in the holy baptism Michael. With Christ’s strength and the sign of the cross he overcame the tough and unyielding Bulgarian tribe and illuminated with the light of understanding their hearts darkened by the evil-scheming satanic endeavor; turned them away from the dark, deceiving, stinking, and abominable to God sacrifices and led them from darkness to light and from falsehood and iniquity to the truth; cast out their reeking and polluted foods and destroyed their sacrificial tables; strengthened them in the orthodox Christian faith with the holy books; brought over Archbishop Joseph⁶ and other teachers and instructors; built churches and monasteries; and set up bishops, priests, and abbots to lead and direct his people on the path of God. Then God granted him, as he took the angelic image,⁷ to leave this delusional life and present himself to Christ in the upper Jerusalem.

While he was still living as a monk and Vladimir, his first son, ruled in his stead, by Michael’s and God’s will Simeon overthrew his brother and sat on the throne.⁸ Then the Magyars rose against him and captured his people; he fought them but they won.⁹ In that year I fought in the

⁶ The name of the first archbishop of Bulgaria was Stephen.

⁷ I.e., became a monk.

⁸ In 893.

⁹ The Magyars were called to help the Byzantines to stave off an attack by Simeon early in his reign.

war. I had no rank nor did I live where the prince did, but outside, with the people. When the Magyars gave us the chase, fifty of us took the same road. They followed us, and my horse began to get weary. I called out loud: “Oh Lord God of the Christians! Help me and deliver me through the prayers of the great martyr George!” Then I turned to St George and said: “St George, when I took the holy baptism, the priest gave me your name. I am your servant, save me now from the pagans!” Then the right front leg of my horse sunk into the earth and broke but my comrades kept riding on. There was a small thicket in a gully there. I strung my bow, took the arrows in my hand, and ran toward it and away from my horse. Looking over my shoulder, I saw the Magyars closing on the horse, and I cried aloud: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me and send me the one who pleases you, the martyr George, to protect me and save me in this hour!” And lo and behold, as soon as I cried out these words, all in tears, my horse ran to me, its leg whole. The Magyars ran after it, wanting to catch it, but none of them came even close. I said again: “Glory to Thee, Lord, for Thou are never far away from those who call on Thee from the bottom of their hearts. Great George, be with me!” Then I mounted the horse and through God’s power and St George’s protection the Magyars, although they shot many arrows, did not harm me. Presently I found myself in my village, which was a three days journey from the place where the Magyars shot at me. Two days later, only two of my comrades came back; the rest have been caught up with and killed.

Then Simeon, having heard that the Magyars are threatening us one more time, led us again to war. I was in my house, in bed with my wife, when a clean-shaved man, so bright that I could not look him in the face appeared to me. He told me: “George, you have to go to war, but buy yourself another horse for that one will die suddenly on the third day of the journey. I command you to skin the leg that it broke so that you can see the power of the most holy Trinity and the help of the holy martyr George. But don’t use what you will find on that leg for anything but a honorable cross and be silent about it until you see the glory of God.” I asked: “Lord, who are you, and why cannot I look you in the face?” “I am,” he said, “Christ’s servant George, the one whom, when praying, you called on.” I arose, as if from a dream, praised God and St George, and then, as the saint commanded, purchased another horse. Before I set off to war, I called the priest for a service, slaughtered my most expensive ox, ten sheep, and ten pigs, and gave away the meat to the poor. So I went to war with two horses. As

we rode, on the third day my horse fell sick, fell dawn, and breathed its last. We were in a hurry, and my comrades were unwilling to allow me to skin the leg, but after I told them how it broke its leg as we fled, they agreed and waited for me for a while. We skinned the leg and found on it, just under the knee, three iron rings, which held the bone in place, for it had not broken clean off, but had cracked along the bone's length. We tried hard to pull out the rings but in vain. Then we cut off the bone, laid it down on a rock and shattered it with our axes; thus we managed to take the irons out. Marveling at the great and unspoken power of the holy Trinity and the speedy assistance of the holy martyr George, we praised God and set off to war. With God's mercy, none of us died in that war, but we all returned safe and sound.

When I came back home, I found my wife burning with a severe fever. After a couple of weeks, seeing the sufferings of my wife, I took courage and prayed thus: "Lord, through the prayers of the one who gave birth to you, and those of the one that pleases you, St George, cure your servant Maria!" Then I laid the three rings on her and she promptly arose, completely healed, and praised God and the holy martyr George. And I, having realized the holy Trinity's mercy and love for humanity, called the blacksmith and told him: "Forge me, brother, a cross from these rings." And so he did, just like the saint had told me.

Many other miracles did that cross perform: demons were exorcized with it from the people, and through the prayers of the great and holy martyr George it helped the lame and in wars.

Diplomatic Records

71 *Official formulas for diplomatic receptions in Byzantium, tenth century.*

The formulas contain the procedural greetings of Bulgarian envoys during imperial audiences in tenth-century Constantinople. The diplomatic protocol reflects the Bulgarian acknowledgement of Byzantine political theology as well as the evolving status of Bulgaria in the Byzantine Commonwealth, and sheds light on the power structures in the country. Edition: *Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae libri duo* (Bonn, 1829–1830), 681–3.

Greetings of the Bulgarian envoys to the Emperor: "How is the God-crowned Emperor, the spiritual father of the from God ruler of Bulgaria? How is the Lady Empress? How are the Emperors, the sons of his Majesty the Great Emperor, and his other children? How is the most holly oecumenical Patriarch, how are the two *magistri*, how is the entire Senate? How are the four *logothetae*?"

The *Logothete's* greetings to them: “How is the spiritual son of our holy Emperor, the from God ruler of Bulgaria? How is the from God Lady? How is the *kanartekin*¹⁰ and the *buliastarkan*¹¹ sons of the from God ruler of Bulgaria, and his other children? How are the six great *boljari*? How are the rest of the inner and outer *boljari*? How are the people?”

After he changed his title and was accepted as a son, the Bulgarians asked in the following manner: “How is his Majesty the Great Emperor who sits on the golden throne? How is the Emperor, the son of his Majesty the Great Emperor, and his other children? How is the Lady Empress? How is the most holy oecumenical Patriarch? How are the *magistri*, the *proconsuls*, and the *patricians*? How is the Senate? How are the generals and the troops of the holy Emperor?”

Letters of the Bulgarian Prince Simeon to magister Leo Choerosphactes, Byzantine imperial envoy, 895–896.

72

The correspondence between Leo and Simeon took place during a Byzantine-Bulgarian confrontation at which the Byzantines enlisted the Magyars to attack Bulgaria from the north-east. The young prince sued for peace, but instead conducting negotiations in person, began a lengthy and slow correspondence with the Byzantine envoy, whom he had placed in custody, hoping to hold off the Byzantine offensive until he defeated the Magyars. The major issue was the fate of the Byzantine prisoners of war seized in 894. Edition: Georgias Kolias, *Léon Choerosphactés, magister, proconsul, et patrice* (Athens, 1939), 77, 79, 81, 113.

Simeon, Prince of Bulgaria, to Leo *magister*, envoy, sent to Bulgaria for the first time.

Last year your emperor demonstrated himself worthy of being wondered at for he not only told us when the solar eclipse was to occur, the month, the week, the day, the hour and the minute when it happened, and how long the eclipse would last as well. They say he knows other things too, about the movements of the celestial bodies. If this is true he will also know about the prisoners of war. And because he knows, he can tell you whether we will let them go or whether we will keep them. Do let us know, therefore, what you think we will do and, God is my witness, if you foresee our secret intention, you will receive the prisoners as a reward for your mission and your foresight. Salve!

¹⁰ The heir to the throne.

¹¹ The second son of the ruler.

Simeon, Prince of Bulgaria, to Leo *magister*.

You did not guess right, *magister*, the future and the secret things, writing to us what you wrote. Your emperor too, preoccupying himself with the celestial movements, does not know the future. Indeed, I had in mind, I intended, God is my witness, to return the prisoners. But now I will not return them, because you did not foresee the future and falsely thought that they would not be returned; no reward for your [false] prophecy. Salve!

Simeon, Prince of Bulgaria, to Leo *magister*.

Magister Leo, I did not promise anything about the prisoners; I did not tell you anything. I will not send them back, especially because you did not foresee correctly the future.

Law

- 73 Law for Judging the Common People, *early legal collection (late ninth to early tenth century)*.

The *Law for Judging the Common People* was composed to meet the need to put Slavic legal custom in step with the precepts of Christianity. Based mostly on the seventeenth title of the Byzantine legal collection *Ecloga ton nomon*, it reads more like an official judge's manual. While scholars disagree on who was the original target of the code and its purpose and function, and the core of the text might have been prepared during Methodius' ministry in Moravia in the 860s–880s, the indications for South Slavic/Bulgarian environment are unmistakable. They are perhaps best explained with a Bulgarian revision and/or transliteration either in the late ninth or the very early tenth century. From Bulgaria the text migrated to Russia and is preserved in dozens of thirteenth-century manuscripts as part of the *Kormchaja Kniga*, an official legal compilation of canon law. Previous editions and translations of the texts into English: Horace W. Dewey and Ann M. Kleimola, trans. *Žakon sudnyi ljudem Court Law for the People* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977) [= Michigan Slavic Materials, no. 14], 3–29; *MB*, 69–83 (excerpts). The translation here is from the shorter of the Slavic (Bulgarian) versions, most likely the original one.

Article 1. Before all justice God's justice should be discussed. That is why St Constantine, as he wrote the first law said this: Any village in which pagan sacrifices and oaths are performed is to be given over to God's temple with all of its properties. If there are lords in the village and they perform sacrifices and swear oaths, sell them with all of their property and give their price to the poor.

Article 2. The prince and the judge should not hear cases of quarrel, accusation, or slander without many witnesses but should say to those who quarrel, accuse, or slander: “If you do not provide witnesses as God’s law dictates, expect to get the same punishment as the one you demand for others.” This is what God’s law dictates, cursed be the one who does not keep to it.

Article 2a. Of witnesses. Before all, in any quarrel the prince and the judge should with every possible attention and patience make an inquiry and not judge without witnesses but find out upright, God-fearing, reputable witnesses who have neither hostility, nor hatred, nor wile, nor dispute, nor grievance with the one on whose account they witness, but [are inspired] only by fear of God and his justice.

The number of witnesses should be no less than eleven and in cases of petty squabbles seven to three but no less than that number.

The judge has the power to warn witnesses before giving testimony and remind them that if they are found out to have lied they will be either sold, or condemned to [suffer] the same punishment.¹²

In no [dispute] those who have ever been caught lying and offending against God’s law, or have indulged in bestiality, or have no knowledge of the [matter of the] dispute are to be accepted as witnesses; exclude them.

Article 3. Of spoils. When someone goes out to fight with the enemy he has to guard himself against vile and satanic words and deeds, he has to have God in his mind, to pray and seek God’s guidance in the battle; for God helps those whose hearts seek advice, and victory is not won by overwhelming force but it is God’s fortress that gives victory.

The prince takes the sixth part, and all of the people take the rest. Let great and small share equally. The *zhupans* should be content with [what is given to them from] the prince’s share. All other spoils are the people’s share.

If there are some, be they *kmets*,¹³ be they regular folks, who were courageous and accomplished heroic feats, then if there is a prince or a commander there, let them give [to the heroes] from the prince’s share dividing it into whatever is proper, for those who fought and for

¹² As the one they asked for another person.

¹³ The meaning is unclear; most likely village elders. The modern meaning of the word is “mayor.”

those who stayed in the camp. Because this is what the prophet David said, wrote, and enjoined.

Article 4. Whoever has a wife and commits fornication with a slave girl and the whore is caught, let the prince of the land chase her from that land and sell her in another land, and her price be given to the destitute.

The adulterer too, according to God's law should be separated from God's servants and do penance for seven years: stay outside of God's temple during liturgy for two years, for two more years he can only enter the church before the Gospels [are read] and the rest of the time he should stay outside and listen to the liturgy; for another two years [he can hear liturgy] until "I believe in the one God;" and in the seventh year he can attend the entire service but still should not receive communion; at the end of the seventh year he can partake of everything. During the seven years he should live only on bread and water.

Article 5. If anyone fornicates with someone else's slave girl he should pay thirty *stleza*¹⁴ to the girl's master and fast for seven years, but should not be sold. If he is a pauper, his property should be given, even against his will, to the master of the slave girl and he should do penance.

Article 6. If a monk fornicates, according to secular law his nose should be cut off, and in accordance to ecclesiastical law he should do penance for fifteen years.

Article 7. If someone weds his godmother, according to secular law they should be separated and have their noses cut off; according to church law they should be separated and do penance for fifteen years. Their penance should be as follows: for five years they should stay outside, weep, and listen to the liturgy; for four years [they should] stay in the church until the holy Gospel [is read]; for three years until [the words] "I believe in the one God;" for three years they can attend to the end but still stay on bread and water. And so their term will end and in the sixteenth year they can receive everything.

The same punishment applies to anyone who copulates with his goddaughter, as well as to the one who is found with a married woman.

Article 8. If someone has sex with a virgin against the will of her parents and then they reconcile, if he wishes and the parents agree, they can wed. But if he suddenly does not want to then, if he is rich he should give the virgin for her shame a *litre* of gold, that is, seventy

¹⁴ Gold coins.

two *steleza*; if he does not have that much, he should give half of his property; and if he is a poor man, the judge of that land should flog him and banish him from his district. He should do penance for seven years as well, in the way we wrote above.

Article 9. Whoever forces himself upon a virgin girl in a deserted place where she cannot be helped should be sold and his property given to the girl.

Article 10. Whoever forces himself upon a [non-betrothed] nubile virgin before her twentieth year his property should be sold and [the price] given to the girl; same for the one who would do it to a betrothed girl. According to ecclesiastical law all [such] should do penance for seven years, as we stipulated before in the case of a married woman.

Article 11. Whoever forces himself on a betrothed girl, even if she consents, let his nose be cut off.

Article 12. Those who mix blood with their own blood¹⁵ should be separated.

Article 13. If anyone has two wives, let him leave the younger one together with her children and be beaten. The penance is seven years.

Article 14. Whoever sets fire to someone else's forest and fells trees from it he is liable for double restitution.

Article 15. If someone sets houses on fire because of an old rancor or to plunder them, if in a town, burn him, if in a village or hamlet, cut him down with the sword. According to ecclesiastical law he should do penance for twelve years for he is an evildoer.

If someone, wanting to burn down stalks or thorn bushes on his field, sets them on fire, and the fire spreads to someone else's field or vineyard and burns them down, he should be found and tried. If it happened out of ignorance or if he is a minor, the one who set the fire should compensate the [one whose property] burned down; [same] if someone sets fire on a windy day and does not watch it, saying that the fire would not spread, or being lazy, that he could not do anything. If he took all precautions but a storm came and caused the fire to spread, such should not be tried.

If a cloud¹⁶ sets fire to someone's house and burns something in that house, and the fire spreads and burns down the houses of his close neighbors, he should not be tried since the blaze happened unexpectedly.

¹⁵ Committing incest.

¹⁶ Lightning.

Article 16. No one should forcefully drive out from the church those who sought sanctuary in it. Those who fled there should explain the affair and their guilt to the priests, who will accept them as fugitives until an inquiry is done according to the law and the accusations are investigated.

If someone attempts to use force to take the fugitive out of the church, whoever he might be, let him suffer one hundred and forty [lashes until he] bleeds. Then let there be a due inquiry into the accusation against the one who fled.

Article 17. If someone is in litigation with another and takes action on his own, be it through force or through power, without informing the authorities, if the right was on his side, he should lose his case and give back the [disputed] thing.

And if he took someone else's chattel, the governor of the land should beat him for he has no right¹⁷ to be governor of himself. The chattel should be returned to the one from whom it had been taken.

Article 18. The testimony of parents against children or vice-versa should not be trusted; a slave or a freedman cannot witness for or against his master.

Article 19. If someone buys a prisoner of war with all his chattels from foreigners and the former can pay his price, let him be set free.

If he cannot ransom himself let him work as a slave until he ransoms himself. And if he negotiates in front of witnesses his pay [called] *mazda* let it be three *steleza* per year, and when the bond is paid let the slave be set free.

Article 20. Witnesses should not testify by hearsay, saying we heard from someone that this person is a debtor or something of the sort that they know by hearsay, even if the witnesses are *zhupans*.

Article 21. A soldier who has [been captured and] deserted our Christian faith and returns to his land should be given to the church.

Article 22. If someone borrows a horse to go to a certain place and then it happens that it gets injured or dies, the one who borrowed it should compensate the horse's owner.

Article 23. If someone locks up someone else's beast and starves it to death or causes its death in another way, let his sentence be double compensation.

¹⁷ Literally: "power."

Article 24. If someone steals during war time, if it is weapons, beat him, if it is a horse, sell him.

Article 25. If a master wishes to keep his thieving slave, he should pay for the damage done; if he does not want to keep him, let him deliver the slave to the one who has been robbed.

Article 26. Whoever drives away someone else's cattle, the first time beat him, the second time banish him from the land, the third time sell him, but not before he returns everything.

Article 27. Whoever (dis)robs the dead in the grave, sell him.

Article 28. If someone enters the altar by day or by night and takes some of the sacred vessels and vestments or any other thing, sell him. If he takes something outside of the altar, beat him, let him be shorn and led around the land like an excommunicated person.

Article 29. Whoever captures a free man and sells him or enslaves him let him be enslaved and put under the same conditions he put the free man.

Article 30. Whoever steals someone else's slave, hides him, and does not let him go, he is guilty before the master of the slave and either has to give another slave or pay his price.

Article 31. Of spouses. God ordained that those married cannot be separated. The wisdom of our Savior and Lord God teaches us that just as he created man's life out of nothing, he could have, but he did not, create woman from soil, but took a rib from man and created her, so that they are alike in the superior wisdom and as one flesh in two persons he created their inseparable bond. But woman, as she tasted the bitter taste gave his husband of the same bitter fruit because of the satanic instigation. They broke the divine order together and for their sin were given death, but it did not break their bond.

That was clear and the Gospel confirms it. When the Pharisees asked our God Christ whether one should be separated from his wife for sin, Jesus responded: "What God has joined together let no man rent asunder except for adultery." We, following this as true disciples of [our] God Christ, do not dare postulate otherwise.

But because evil brings about hatred and accusations between spouses because of carnal or other vices among the cases in which the law allows for separation of spouses are: a husband can be separated from his wife if it becomes known that she plotted against him or caused him to suffer from some leprosy or another affliction and if the man finds out and she does not admit and he suffers from the leprosy.

Also, a wife can be separated from her husband if he causes her to suffer from some leprosy or something else because he been suffering from that [before the marriage and] did not tell her and [she] fell victim to [the] affliction, or if something happened that caused [her] leprosy.

About all this the judge should inquire through witnesses, as we wrote above. This is ordered everywhere and all human offenders will be judged by the great court of God.

That is why no one should hold back, but everyone should at all times be instructed in God's law, as they trust to Christ our God to hear them in the cosmic court: "Came to me you blessed and faithful servants, I will arrange all well for you, enter into the joy of your Lord God and rejoice with the angels for all ages. Amen."

Instruction in Christianity and polemics

- 74 *Clement of Ohrid, Instructions to bishops and priests, late ninth or early tenth century.*

Clement of Ohrid (+ 916) was the senior and most prolific of the disciples of the Slavic apostles Cyril and Methodius. Sent by Tsar Simeon to the Bulgarian southwest to further the spread of Christianity and the Slavic letters, he engaged in ceaseless labors for decades, producing an impressive number of eulogies and instructional sermons. The excerpt here reflects his concerns with the quality of Christian instruction and the danger of heresy. Edition: Bonju Angelov et al., eds., *Kliment Ohridski, Sabrani sachenia*, 3 vols. (Sofia 1970–1973).

It becomes to the bishop and the priest to teach and instruct the people entrusted to him. As for the bishop and the priest himself, he is to avoid all evil, as apostle Paul directed and even more than him, Christ. Because, says apostle Paul, the bishop is God's appointee and should be free of all blemish, being neither presumptuous, nor angry, nor a drunkard, nor wicked, not greedy for lowly gain, but a open-minded, just, keeping to the true word as he had been taught it, so that he provides real consolation in the true doctrine and exposes those who resist, and should in all demonstrate himself to be the paragon of all good deeds.

Listen up, shepherds, for this sermon is for you! Listen, all of you who have God's word! Listen, you elders, the voice of the great leader of the shepherds Christ, who said: "The good shepherd gives up his soul for his flock; but the mercenary, who is not a shepherd and the

sheep is not his, sees the wolf coming and flees, leaving the sheep to be devoured and dispersed by the wolf.”

So, from where do the wicked dogs, the heretical teachings, come? Is it not from the laziness and rudeness of the shepherds? Where do the robbers and the thieves come from, that is, the sins and iniquities? [They come] from the ignorance and inexperience of the bishops and the priests. Indeed, how could they teach correctly the divine word when they are simpletons who know not the Law, the fundament of the lawgivers? And oftentimes they act out of greed, which is second idolatry.

Let me say it again: Listen, you shepherds, and guard diligently the flock entrusted to you, teach them with meekness and instruct them with love, so that the words [of God] do not apply to you: “Woe to you, blind leaders, for closing the gates of the kingdom of heaven before the people; neither will you enter, nor will you allow others to enter!”

Obeys the Leader of the shepherds! Do not cease to instruct the people entrusted to you!

Clement of Ohrid, Sermon for Feast Days.

The sermon is a blanket blueprint for less sophisticated preachers that could be adapted for specific occasions. It is extant in several dozens of Russian manuscripts dating from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. Edition: Angelov et al., eds., *Kliment Ohridski*, I, 65–6, 71–2.

Brothers: Know that today is the feast day of saint (say the name). You should gather in church to pray, for according to the Gospel “Where two or three of you come together in my name, I will be among you.” This, brothers, the Lord promised Himself and He is here, among the faithful. That is why we ought to come to the holy temple and pray to Him with pure hearts cleansed from anger and hatred and, above all, beg forgiveness for our many sins. Hasn’t it been said “Everything you ask for with faith in your prayer will be granted to you,” and “When you pray,” the Lord said, “do not mention in your prayer unnecessary things as the pagans do.” Unnecessary means to ask the Lord for wealth, or high office, or victory over your enemies, or other earthly things. “But first seek the Kingdom of Heaven and its justice and then everything will be given unto you; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all those things.”

As we celebrate the holy feast we have to do it this way: first and foremost we are to emulate the purity of the saints and their good lives pleasing God. We please God and our prayer reaches Him if we

celebrate the feast days with our hearts rather than giving ourselves to gluttony. We feast at the table to honor them, but we ought to look up to their holy feasts and enlighten our souls and illuminate our hearts with [their] purity. Verily, such are the feasts that please God: welcoming strangers, feeding the hungry, dressing the naked, visiting prisoners carrying alms, supporting the wronged, helping the sick and the poor, and humbly honoring each other with sincerity and true love. Then God will say to us: "Let it be according to your faith." Then our prayers will be heard. The prayer accompanied by alms will be heard and acknowledged. "Such are the sacrifices," said St Paul, "that please God." The prophet said of the same thing "The humble spirit is the best sacrifice to God; God will not spurn the repentant heart." The Lord said as well "I want mercy, not sacrifice."

Brothers, as we listen to this, let us inscribe it in our hearts and always instruct ourselves in it when celebrating the feasts in honor of those who had pleased God. Did God not give them the power to forgive sins on heaven and earth? Through them He also grants wellbeing to those who honor them properly. As we duly celebrate their lives and sufferings, let us too, do the good works, follow the way, and guard the true faith. Let us always abide by the divine commandments and learn from them. Praying down on our knees in the temple of the divine glory, let us beg forgiveness for our sins. Let us stand there in awe and not only refrain from conversations but, having driven evil thoughts away from our hearts, be attentive to the readings and singings as well. Let us always praise the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with pure lips, now, forever, and for all ages. Amen.

76 *Clement of Ohrid, Sermon on the Transfiguration.*

This is perhaps the most popular of Clement's sermons. It is preserved in ca. 120 copies in manuscripts from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. Almost all of them identify Clement as its author. Edition: Angelov et al., eds., *Klement Ohridski*, I, 743–44.

Brothers: Hearken to what happened on this holy day. On this day, brothers, our Lord Jesus Christ revealed to His disciples His divine glory and showed them the power that He has over the quick and the dead. For in spite of the many signs which He performed the stone-hearted Jewish nation would not believe in Him but said "If he were God or the son of God he would not have tramped upon the Law of Moses which we received from God: he is an enemy of the Law!" Witnessing yet more of the miracles which He performed some said

that He was Elijah, others, Moses, or another of the ancient prophets. Because of this the minds of the disciples got confused. They knew that Elijah ascended to heaven but did not know whether he got back down in a different guise. They knew as well that the law-giver Moses had passed away long ago.

As this caused disputes and disbelief among them, it became necessary that the Lord showed to His disciples the glory of His divine nature to avoid confusion. That is why He took Peter, Jacob, and John with Himself and led them to the mountain of Tabor where He revealed to them that He was the Son of God lest they fall into confusion and empty discussions.

When Jesus reached the summit, His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as snow. Immediately, Moses and Elijah appeared and conversed with Christ. The latter announced the passions which Christ would undergo on our behalf and the former spoke about the law which he had bequeathed to them and which the Lord had written down Himself, with His own hand, before his Incarnation. But the Jews did not abide by it and wanted to murder the law-giver himself.

The disciples saw His divine glory and fell down on their faces, for they could not gaze at the brilliance of His face. A voice came down from heaven and said: "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him!"

Brothers, we too heard that voice: let us not be lazy and abide by His commandments. The Lord said "This is what I command you: Love each other the way I loved you and incarnated myself because of you. I went about thirsty, hungry, and naked, thirsting for your salvation. In return for the food you gave me I will treat you with the eternal and heavenly meal. In return for the simple robe that you gave away to the poor I will clothe you in incorruptible vestments."

Brothers, you heard all this. Do not harden your hearts to the destitute for we give not to them but to our God Christ. Let us hasten to repent in expectation of His mercy for we know not when our last hour will come. If He finds us steeped in evil and non-repenting how will we be cleansed from sin? After that we will not be able to do penance or good works, or to follow the commandments. Make haste, therefore, and be ready in the hour of our death so that honor and mercy come our way and the Lord says to us as well: "Good and trusted servant, you have been diligent even in small things: I will place you above great ones. Enter the joy of your Lord" through Jesus Christ, our Lord, glory to Him.

- 77 *Constantine of Preslav, Gospel's Instruction, late ninth or early tenth century.* Constantine was a direct disciple of Methodius and served as presbyter, that is, priest in the capitals Pliska and Preslav. He was active during the last decades of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century, and was especially strong in poetry. When he came to Bulgaria is unclear. He might have been among the disciples sold as slaves in Venice after the suppression of vernacular literacy in Moravia and later ransomed by the Byzantines as mentioned in the *Life* of his teacher; alternatively, he might have been either the priest or the deacon whom Methodius left in Constantinople during his visit in 881 or 882. Parts of the *Gospel's Instruction* were most likely from the time of Khan Rasate (889–893), Boris-Michael's son who led the pagan reaction that followed the conversion. The *Gospel's Instruction* reflects Constantine's firm dedication to the new faith and was the first systematic Christian instructional collection in the Slavic tongue. The *Instruction* contains 51 sermons for all Sundays of the year. It is extant in manuscripts from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. The sermons are largely translations; only the prologue, introductions, conclusions, and Sermon 42 are Constantine's original work. Apart from this, Constantine is the author of a short annalistic work; he translated Athanasius's *Four Sermons Against the Arians*; penned a *Service* to his teacher Methodius; wrote a moving *Alphabetical Prayer*, defending the dignity of the Slavic alphabet; and composed several canons. Other works of his may still come to light. Edition: Archbishop Anthony, *Iz istorij christijanskoj propovedi* (St Petersburg, 1895).

Prologue

It is good, brothers, always to begin with God and finish with God, as Gregory the Theologian said, to instruct ourselves in the divine law day and night, as the prophet said, and to give away the words of God to the desiring souls. "I did not hide Your mercy and Your truth at many gatherings," and again, "I will proclaim Your name to my brothers and I will praise You in church." For that reason I, the modest Constantine, reassured by your pleading as well, brother Naum, and by the commandments mentioned above, bowed to your humility. And you, brothers, fathers, and sons who desire instruction do not criticize me, the daring one, but try to enjoy it and make ready to listen. Not having anything to call my own I am following the One who gave much fruit to the barren and speech to the mute. It is evident from the following example: I find that Barlaam's mare once spoke with a human voice and that a dry rock sprouted water for the thirsty people to show the greatness of God's deeds.

And so I, the humble one, urged as I said to translate the interpretation of the Holy Gospel from Greek into Slavic and as I saw sermons so much above my understanding and powers, feared and trembled. However, being more afraid of the future death on account of disobedi-

ence and not being able to write everything at once, I began with the *ustav*, the Sunday [Gospels]. I beg for the prayers of the Christ-lovers so that I and successful and let our common Lord God Jesus Christ grant me to complete what I have promised for the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen!

...

Did you hear about the faith of the blind man, did you learn of his audacious courage, how he was not afraid of the people, how he did not fear the prohibition imposed on him when he called out loud, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Not with his carnal eyes he wished to be able to see but with his spiritual ones, to glean His real essence. And how the glory of God followed after Him? That is why we pray to Him: to be able to see with our spiritual eyes, to fulfill His commandments and to glorify Him skillfully, without fearing the kings, without being afraid of the princes, without being ashamed before the magnates, and even if persecution is afoot and pain continues, if need be let us not be frightened and let us not forsake His love, but let us boldly continue to preach and pray.

Let us remember the holy martyrs as well: were they not of our kind, did they not surrender their bodies to torture and fire, beasts and death? Let us not relinquish His love, let us not turn our backs on Him. And even though not in all days we will be better as servants of the magnates, we will be gladder. Our remuneration will be greater if we do the magnates’ work along with doing God’s work. Let us love Him so that He loves us!

Sermon 42.

Brothers, fathers, and sons! Listen carefully, for today’s holiday will not pass away just like that but will provide us with spiritual food that does not sustain the body but brings joy to the soul. Let us listen and marvel at the Lord’s mercy and love of humanity: how He, wishing to save us, went around and endured suffering. He bent the heavens on our behalf and descended, and went about hungry and thirsty to win over humankind. And He not only cleanses our souls from sin; He heals our bodies as well. You heard what the evangelist Luke said: “Once He entered a village and met ten leprous men.” Because our Lord Jesus Christ is merciful and loves humanity, he did not skip villages and towns which begged to be delivered from the heavy affliction. He, merciful as He was, and not willing to show Himself as enemy of the law of Moses, cured them and told them “Show yourselves to the

priests.” There were nine Jews among them and a Samaritan. When they were cured, they set off as commanded to show themselves to the priests. But the nine were ungrateful and did not come back to offer Him praise as to God. Only the tenth one, the foreigner, returned and offered Him his gratitude. For the heathen are better in the faith than the cruel-hearted Jews. That is why the Master said “Were the other nine not cleansed?” In this way he put to shame the shameless Jewish faces, for they received much bounty from God the Father but reverted to ingratitude.

Because of this, friends, let us be like that foreigner for our most generous and most merciful God cleanses not only our bodies but our souls as well should we only approach Him with gratitude. We are His creatures, made for good works rather than lies and envy. Let us, therefore, perform good works. For who untied our minds, opened our mouths, and cleared our tongues? Isn’t it the One who gave wisdom to the meek and sense to the young boy? Yes, yes! He said “Whatever you ask for you will receive it if you believe.”

This is why I beg of you, brothers and fathers, help me with your prayers to God to be worthy to fulfill your promise and praise the Holy Trinity together with you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One most merciful God to whom glory now, forever, and for all ages. Amen.

- 78 *Constantine of Preslav, The Alphabetical Prayer, tenth century.*
Edition: Kujo M. Kuev, *Azbučnata molitva v slavjanskite literaturi* (Sofia, 1974), 170–74. Existing translation: Dujchev and Nikolov, *Kiril i Methodius*, 143–46.

I pray to God with these words:
Oh God, Creator of every being,
of the visible and the invisible,
send the life-giving Lord-Spirit,
to infuse the Word in my heart,
which will be of benefit for everyone
who lives under Thee commandments.
Because Thee law
is the true light of life,
shining upon the paths of those
who are seeking the Gospel’s word
and long to receive your gifts.
Now the Slavic people soar high,
having all turned toward baptism

wishing to be called your people;
 for you mercy, God, they fervently pray.
 And to me give abundant words
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
 to me, who begs Thee for help.
 I am stretching my arms upwards,
 to ask for power and wisdom from Thou
 for it is Thee who gives power to the worthy
 and heals every being.
 Deliver me from the hatred of the Pharaoh
 give me a Cherub's prudence and wings,
 oh most holy and honest Trinity.
 Turn my sorrows into joys
 so that I begin the chaste description
 of your most wise miracles
 adopting the powers of the six-winged ones.
 I follow now in the tracks of the teachers,
 emulate their names and their deeds.
 I will make evident the Word of the Gospel,
 diving praise to the divine Trinity,
 which honors every age,
 young and old, with understanding,
 and a whole new people,
 who give praise to
 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 to Whom it becomes that honor, sovereignty, and power,
 be given by every creature that breaths
 through the ages and forever. Amen.

Constantine of Preslav, Annunciation of the Gospel, late ninth or early tenth century. 79

Edition: *BSM*, 338–44. Existing translation into English: Dujchev and Nikolov, *Kiril i Methodius*, 147–150.

Annunciation of the Holy Gospel.

As the prophets foretold,
 Christ is coming to gather the peoples
 for He is the light of the entire world.
 And they said: The blind will be able to see;
 the deaf will hear the written word

and will know God, as it is meet.
For that reason listen up, you Slavs,
because such is the gift of God,
a gift for the right side,
a gift that never decays
in the souls that accept it.
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
teach everyone, saying this:
You who seek the beauty of the soul,
look, love, and rejoice;
You who want to cast out innumerable sins,
purge the decay of this world,
thus entering the life of Paradise,
and escaping the burning flames,
listen now and apply your mind to it.
Listen, oh you Slavic peoples,
listen to the Word, because it came from God,
the word that nurtures the human souls
the word that prepares us to know God.
Just like without light there is no joy
for the eye that gazes at the creatures of God,
but sees nothing that is beautiful or visible,
just so the illiterate soul
does not see well the divine law,
the written, the spiritual law,
the law that reveals the Paradise of God.
For what hearing that does not hear
the rumble of the thunder, fears God?
What nostrils that cannot smell the flower
would understand the miracle of God?
The mouth that does not sense sweetness
turns the man into stone.
Even more than that the illiterate soul
is dead among the people.
Having realized this, brothers,
we give you the advice you need,
through which people will break free
from beastly life and lust;
so that you, whose mind is not yet enlightened,
hearing the Word [preached] in a foreign language,

take it for the call of a copper bell.
St Paul, teaching, said this:
“As I offer my prayer to God,
I would rather utter five words
which everyone will comprehend,
than a thousand words no one will understand.”
Is there someone who does not comprehend [this]?
Who would not apply the wise parable
relating to us the words of truth
that, like decay seizes the flesh
and makes it rot, turning it more mucky than the muck,
just so every soul is abandoned by life
if it does not have the divine life
if it does not listen to the divine Word.
And another parable, no less instructive,
let us relate. The people who love each other
want to grow with the ascent to God
but who does not know what is the true faith:
it is like a seed that falls into the field,
so does it fall into the human heart
and needs the divine rain of the letters,
so that the fruit of God grows well.
But who can relate all parables
that debunk, even without books,
the drivel of the pagans?
No, even if one knew all languages
it would not be possible to reveal their helplessness.
Let me, nevertheless, add my own parable,
summing up great wisdom in a short sermon:
People without books are naked,
possessing no armor to fight against
the enemy of our souls,
ready for the imprisonment of the eternal sorrows.
And you people, who do not love the enemy
and make ready to fight him,
open diligently the gates of the mind
having now gotten the strong weapons
forged by the books of God,
mightily pressing down the head of the sly one.
Those, therefore, who accept the wisdom

of these writings, Christ speaks in them,
 and always strengthens your souls
 as the prophets did [strengthen] the apostles.
 Those who speak with their words
 will be able to slay the enemy
 offering to God a good victory,
 escaping from the polluted decay of the flesh,
 of the flesh whose life is but a dream;
 [they will] stand up strong and will not falter,
 appearing worthy before God
 they will be standing on the right side of the throne of God
 when He judges the peoples with fire;
 rejoicing with the angels through the ages,
 praising the merciful God for ever
 and always in songs putting down in writing,
 glorifying the humans-loving God,
 for to Him is due the divine glory, honor, and praise
 along with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
 [offered by] every creature throughout the ages. Amen.

80 Prologue to *Tsar Simeon's collection of St John Chrysostomos' sermons, tenth century.*

Called by the Byzantines “half-Greek” on account of his superior education, Tsar Simeon ranks very highly among the rulers of the time with his competence, and his obvious interest in the sacred literature. His taste was encyclopedic, but his personal inclination was with moralistic works. Edition: Peter N. Petrov, *Hranilishte Chutova monastirja* (St Petersburg, 1879), 163.

Since the pious Tsar Simeon learned all old and new books, the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the Holy Scripture, the customs and traditions of all the teachers, and the prudent wisdom of the blessed John Chrysostomos, he marveled at the latter's rhetorical eloquence and the grace of the Holy Spirit. And because he became accustomed to reading all of his books, he selected from his works all sermons and gathered them together in a book he called *Zlatostruj* [Stream of Gold]. Given that “stream of gold” has already been applied to another [work], I believe that we will not be wrong to call this book “Stream of Gold.” For the teaching of the Holy Spirit, similar to a golden stream, washes away through sweet human talk all sins like the deliverance of penance and brings us closer to God. Like a smoothing stone it peels off with attractive sermons all corporeal and spiritual dirt and thirsts to fill the

dwelling of God with the virtuous deeds of the Christians. To ensure the greater success of the multitude and gently nudge them, as well as not to tire those who read them at the gatherings and thus incline them toward slackening, we selected a small number from among the many, especially from those that we liked. Everyone who reads them carefully and with discretion and does not slacken will find them of great benefit for their body and soul.

Hrabr the Monk, Treatise on the Letters, late ninth or early tenth century. 81

This spirited defense of the Slavic letters and the achievement of the Slavic apostles and their disciples is the only work of the enigmatic Hrabr, whose name (meaning “the brave monk”) may hide the identity of Tsar Simeon himself. Constantine-Cyril, Clement of Ohrid, Ioan Exarch, and the monk Dox, the brother of Prince Boris, have all been proposed as alternative possibilities. Kuev’s well-argued position that Hrabr was a separate person seems most plausible. The *Treatise* was extremely popular and is extant in at least 80 manuscripts. The earliest copy, from which the following translation is made dates from 1348. Edition: Kujō M. Kuev, *Chernorizec Hrabr* (Sofia, 1967); Kuev publishes 73 texts of the *Treatise*. Existing translation in English: *MB*, 143–54.

To begin with, in the past the Slavs had no books but, being pagans, read and augured with strokes and notches. After they converted, they were forced to write down the Slavic speech with Roman and Greek letters without adapting them. But how can one write well with Greek letters **БОГЪ** or **ЖИВОТЪ**, or **ЗЪЛО**, or **ЦРЬКЪ**, or **ЧЛОВЪКЪ**, or **ШИРОТА**, or **ЩЕДРОТЫ**, or **ЮНОСТЬ**, or **ЖДОУ**, or **ИЗЪКЪ** or **ИДЪ**, and other things like those? And so it was for many years.

Then God, who loves humanity, who arranges everything, and who does not leave the human species without wisdom but brings everyone to reason and salvation, took mercy on humanity and sent down St Constantine the Philosopher, called Cyril, an orthodox and truth-loving man, and he invented thirty-eight letters for them, some modeled after the Greek letters, some according to the Slavic speech. At first he began as in Greek. They say *alpha* and he said *az*. Both alphabets begin with “A.” And just like the Greeks created their letters after the Hebrew [letters], so did he [invent the Slavic letters] after the Greek [letters]. The Jews have *aleph* as their first letter, which is to say “study.” A child bound to school is told “study,” that is, *aleph*. The Greeks, imitating this, said *alpha*. And so the Jewish expression was adapted to the Greek language, and they say to the child *alpha* even though in Greek that means “seek” instead of “seek to study.” Similar to that, St Cyril

created the letter *az*. Being the first letter given by God to the Slavic people to untie the tongue of those who learn to understand through the alphabet, *az* is pronounced with the mouth widely open, while the other letters are pronounced with a small opening of the mouth.

These are the Slavic letters and this is how they are to be written and pronounced: **А, Б, В**, and all the way to **Щ**; their number is twenty-four. The following are similar to the Greek letters: **Ѡ, Ѣ, Г, Д, Ё, З, И, (Ѡ), К, Л, М, Н, Ѡ, П, Р, С, Т, У, Ф, Х, Ц, Ч, Ш**.

The following fourteen are according to the Slavic speech: **Б, Ж, С, Ц, Ш, Ч, Ъ, Ь, Ь, Ъ, Ю, Я, А**.

Some say, “Why did he invent thirty eight letters, when one can write with less, as with the Greeks, who write with twenty-four letters?” They do not know with how many letters the Greeks write. In truth, they have twenty four letters, but they do not fill their books with these [only]. They have added eleven diphthongs and another three for the numbers [namely], 6, 30, and 300. All together they add up to thirty eight. Similar to that and in a similar manner St Cyril created thirty eight letters.

Others say: “What need there is for Slavic books? God did not create them, nor did the angels, nor have they been there from the beginning, like the Hebrew, the Roman, and the Greek letters, which have been around from the beginning, and are accepted by God.” Still others think that God created our letters. They do not know, poor wretches, what they are talking about and believe that God commanded that books be written down solely in three languages, as it is written in the Gospel: “There was a board with writings in Hebrew, Roman, and Greek.” There were no Slavic [writings] there, therefore, the Slavic books are not from God.

What can we say or tell to such brainless [people]? But let us respond to them first of all that, as we have learned from the holy books, God and no one else is the source of everything. The first [language] God created was neither Hebrew, nor Hellenic, but Syrian, which was spoken by Adam, and from Adam to the Flood, and from the Flood until God separated the languages at the making of the Tower, as it is written: “The languages were confounded.” And as the languages were confounded so were the traditions and the customs, as well as the rules, laws, and arts, according to the people. God gave to the Egyptians land-surveying; to the Persians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians

astronomy, astrology, soothsaying, magic, and prophesying, and all the human arts. The Hebrews got the holy books, in which it is written that God created heaven and earth and everything on it, and man, and everything else, as it is written. To the Hellenes He gave grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy.

Before that the Hellenes had no letters in their language but wrote their speech with Phoenician letters. It was like that for many years. Then Palamidus came, began with *alpha* and *vita* and created only sixteen letters for the Hellenes. Kadmus of Miletus added to them another three letters. With these nineteen letters they wrote a long time. Then Symonides invented and added two letters, and the writer Epyharius three letters. This is how they gathered twenty four. Many years later, Dionysius the Grammarian invented six diphthongs, then another one five, and yet another three for the numbers. And so, many men for many years barely gathered together thirty eight letters. Then, after many years have passed, seventy men were found who translated from Hebrew into Greek. But the Slavic books St Constantine, called Cyril, translated everything by himself and he created the letters in a few years, whereas it took the others several years and seven men to invent the letters, and to translate them, seventy more men. For that reason the Slavic letters more holy and deserve to be honored more, because a saintly man created them, while the Greek [letters were created] by pagan Hellenes.

But if someone argues that he did not arrange them well, for they are still being fixed,¹⁸ we will answer thus: the Greek letters too, had to be improved upon several times by Akila and Simachus, and later by many others. For it is easier to improve upon than to create for the first time.

And if you ask the Greek writers, saying: “Who created your letters or translated your scriptures, and when?” there is scarcely anyone among them who knows. But if you ask the Slavic schoolchildren, saying: “Who created your alphabet or translated your books?” they all know, and will answer thus: “St Constantine the Philosopher, called Cyril; he invented our alphabet and translated our books, he and his brother Methodius.” And if you ask when was that, they know, and will say, in the time of the Greek Tsar Michael, and Boris the Bulgarian prince, and Rastitsa

¹⁸ Possible allusion to the transition from Glagolitic to Cyrillic script.

the Moravian prince, and Kotsel the prince of Blaten,¹⁹ in the year of the creation of the world 6363 [855].²⁰

There are other replies²¹ but of them there will be word elsewhere, for now there is no time. This is how, brothers, God gave understanding to the Slavs. To Him be glory, and honor, and power, and worship now, and always, and in the unending ages. Amen.

Heresy and its suppression

- 82 *Presbyter Kosmas*, Sermon Against the Bogomils, *most likely 960s–970s, excerpts*. Presbyter Kosmas wrote the earliest and most detailed refutation of the Bogomil heresy, an indigenous mixture of non-Orthodox religious doctrines that appeared in tenth-century Bulgaria and combined the teachings of several earlier heretical currents of the Eastern Church. Despite the vigorous opposition of the young Bulgarian Church and consistent attempts at repression, Bogomilism persisted. With the fall of the First Bulgarian Kingdom in 1018 and the beginning of a more efficient policy of suppression in Byzantium, Bogomil teachers fled to Western Europe, where they left their imprint on the new heresies of the Rhineland in the Empire, the Cathars in southern France, and the Albigensians. The excerpts selected here illustrate the strong moral and social undertones of Bogomilism, Kosmas' concern with the practicing of monasticism by the members of the upper classes who brought their social customs and attitudes to the monastery, as well as the impact of lingering pagan custom and popular culture on the Christianization of the Bulgarians. I have translated Kosmas' descriptions of heretical theory and practice and other deviations from the Orthodox faith and left out his eloquent, but rather conventional scriptural and logical arguments that counter them. Edition: Jurij Begunov, *Kosma Presbyter v slavjanskijh literaturah* (Sofia, 1973).

[The Priest Bogomil and his followers] It happened in the years of the orthodox Tsar Peter that a priest appeared in the Bulgarian land, by the name of Bogomil or, in truth, Bogunemil.²² He was the first one to preach heresy all over the Bulgarian land. Of his false teaching we will narrate in due course....

¹⁹ Rostislav and Kotsel, respectively rulers of Great Moravia and Panonnia; see the *Long Life* of Clement in Part Three.

²⁰ This year, if calculated with the Byzantine chronological system is inconsistent with the rule of Kotsel, and with the information in the long *Lives* of the Slavic apostles. If, however, Hrabr used the so-called Alexandria chronology, the year would be 863 which would accord with all other information about the creation of the Slavic alphabet.

²¹ To the detractors of the Slavic letters.

²² Pun on the name of Bogomil (“loved by God”): Bogunemil translates as “not loved by God.”

Outwardly, the heretics are like sheep: meek, humble, and silent. Their faces are pale as if from long fasts. They will not utter a word and do not laugh, they are not inquisitive, and shelter themselves from other people's looks. On the outside they do everything so that they cannot be distinguished from the orthodox Christians; on the inside, they are wolves and predators, as God said.

Seeing their great and special humility and thinking that they are orthodox and capable of instruction in matters of salvation, people draw close to them and ask them questions pertaining to the salvation of the soul. But they, like a wolf who wishes to snatch a lamb, first pretend to sigh and answer humbly, and when they preach, purport to be in Heaven. But wherever they see a person who is simple and ignorant, there they sow the weeds of their doctrine and speak against the rules handed down to the holy churches as I will explain later...

But what do the heretics say? We pray to God more than you, keep vigils and pray and do not live in leisure as you do...

But among whom should we count them, what are they like? They are worse than the blind and deaf idols. Idols are made of wood and stone and neither see nor hear. The heretics, although they have the mind of humans, willingly petrified themselves and forsook the true teaching. But can I count them among the demons? They are worse than that. Demons are afraid of Christ's cross, but the heretics chop down crosses and make them into implements. Demons fear God's image painted on a plank; the heretics do not bow to icons and call them idols. Demons are scared by the relics of the blessed of God and dare not come near the chests that hold their priceless treasures, given to Christians to protect them from all harm. The heretics disparage them and laugh at us when they see us bow to them and ask for their help. They forgot the words of God, "Those who believe in me, they will accomplish the feats I do," and even greater ones. Not wanting to glorify the saints, they pour scorn on God's miracles performed by their relics through the power of the Holy Spirit. They say: miracles do not happen because of God's will; they are worked by Satan to deceive the people. And many other bad words they say about them, nodding their heads like the Jews who crucified Christ. Oh, most patient God, how long will you suffer the human kind that angers you so much?...

[On the creation of the world] Indeed, [the heretics] are worse and filthier than the demons. What demon ever resisted the divinity or dared vilifying the world of God as heretics do? And what are they saying? That not God created heaven, or earth, or any visible [thing]....

[On the cross] This is how they speak of the cross, deceiving themselves: How can we bow to it? The Jews crucified on it God's son, and God hates the cross most. That is why they teach theirs to hate the cross and not bow to it, saying this: If someone killed the tsar's son with a wooden cross how come that wood would be dear to the tsar? The same is with God and the cross....

[On communion] And what do they say about the holy communion? The communion was not ordered by God, nor is it Christ's body as you say. It is like any plain food. Christ, during his ministry, did not serve mass, and therefore we do not respect it [they say]. Oh, how great is their blindness! Oh, how petrified are their hearts!...

Tell us, who taught you that nothing has been said about the holy bread and the chalice, as you heretics declare, deceiving yourself that it has been said of the Gospels and the Deeds of the Apostles rather than of the holy communion? You call the "body" the Gospels and "blood" the Deeds of the Apostles....

[On liturgy] And why do you deride the holy rites bequeathed to us by the holy apostles and the God-bearing fathers? I am speaking of the mass and the other liturgies that good Christians perform. You say that it was not the apostles who established the liturgy and the communion but John Chrysostomos, and that between the birth of Christ and John more than three hundred years had passed....

[On clergy] Why do you state that communion and the spiritual rites have not been commanded by God and why do you loath the priests and all ecclesiastical ranks, call the orthodox priests blind Pharisees, and bark at them like dogs at a horseman?....

Even if the orthodox priests spent their time in leisure as you say when you criticize them, they still do not deride the divinity as you do. If they have not been worthy, they would not have been consecrated....

Hearing these words, the heretics respond to us: If you are as holy as you say, why don't you live as you have been commanded and as Paul wrote to Timothy: "The bishop should be chaste, husband of one wife, sober, honest, without blemish, loving strangers, willing to instruct, not a drunkard, not a troublemaker, meek, not quarrelsome, not greedy, and a good manager of his house; the deacons too, should be honest, not double-tongued, they should not drink much wine and be too well-known; first they should be tried, and then let them serve, if found to be without blemish."²³ But we do not see you to be like

²³ 1 Timothy 3:1-10.

this. Priests do exactly the opposite: they drink, rob, and secretly do other deeds, as Paul said: “Expose those who sin in front of everyone, so that the others have fear.” Bishops who cannot restrain themselves as we do, restrain us from prayers and thus make us sin....

Not ashamed, the shameless and arrogant heretics say this as well: How much must they sin in secret if they [openly] live carnally, unlike us who live spiritually? The carnal deeds are those, said Paul: “Adultery, fornication, whoredom, idolatry, magic, feud, envy, jealousy, wrath, murder, drunkenness, games and all like that; those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God....”

Do you see, oh heretic, that it is enjoined upon you to revere the priests though they might be bad?...

The heretics are worse than the Jews who crucified Christ: for the latter affected the body, and the former, the divinity.

[On prophets] Heretics, what apostle and blessed of God taught you to cast out the law handed to Moses by God? What iniquity you found in the prophets to defame them and reject the books written by them? How can you pretend to love Christ but don't accept the prophesies that foretold about him?....

The heretics count for nothing even the great and holy David himself. They reject the words that the Holy Spirit uttered through his mouth. They do not respect Abraham, God's fellow, or Daniel, and the sons of Azarin, and the other prophets whom even the wild beasts feared and the fire spared. They malign even John, the precursor and dawn of the great sun, and call him the precursor of the Antichrist. It is actually they who are the Antichrists, according to words of John the Theologian....

[On the Mother of God] Beside all that evil these wretches do yet another: they do not esteem the most glorious and most pure mother of God, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and many a evil word they utter about her. Their words and disgusting acts cannot be written in this book....

[On icons] The heretics, listening to what Paul said of the idols, that it is not meet that we obey gold and silver worked by human skill think, the wretched ones, that this was said about the icons. Finding justification in these words, they do not bow to icons when by themselves. But for fear of the people, they go to church, kiss the cross and the icons, as those of them who returned to our true faith tells us, saying: “We do all this for the people's sake, but have it not in our hearts; secretly, we guard our faith....”

Do you see, oh heretic, that the words you utter about the icons, that those who worship them are like the Hellenes, are false and seducing?....

[On the Old Testament] But we, they say, do not listen to David, nor to the prophets, but to the Gospels, and we do not live by Moses' law, but by the apostolic one....

But what evil and infamy did heretics see in the law or in the prophets to defame and reject them and claim that they cannot save us?....

Why do you say that the prophets are not holy nor did they utter the prophecies of the Holy Spirit, but their own?....

The wretches think that they know the depths of Scripture. But as soon as they begin interpreting the books, they misrepresent them and bring about their own destruction....

And while they vilify all the laws bequeathed by the holy church of God, they discuss their own teachings with deference, offering all kinds of fables as their father, the devil, teaches them to speak blasphemies....

[On the devil] Many do not even know what kind of heresy is theirs and think that they are suffering for the truth and God will reward them for the chains and the jail. But let them hear Paul, what he says about this: "Even if someone performs great feats, he will not be crowned if he does not do them according to the rules." But how will they be dear to someone²⁴ although they suffer much, if they call the devil the creator of man and all of God's creatures? Because of their great ignorance some call him a fallen angel; others count him as a venial manager. Nonetheless, they esteem him so much as to name him the creator of God's creatures, and God's glory is for them Satan's glory. But God said through the prophet: "My glory will not belong to another...."

The heretics, when they heard the sly devil to speak to Christ: "I will give you everything if you worship me," believed in him, and thought that he was the master of the creatures of God. And when they heard the Lord saying: "Here comes the prince of this world and he will not find anything in me;" when they heard those words, the heretics called the devil master and prince of the creatures of God....

We hear many of ours to say: Why does God allow the devil to attack the people? These are child's words, the product of an insane mind....

Because the heretics departed from Christ's cross and cast it away from themselves, the devil easily has his way with them. Just as those who fish with a rod cannot catch anything if they do not affix a worm

²⁴ Pun on the name of the heresy.

on the hook so the heretics cover their poison with hypocritical humility and fasts. Apart from this, they hold the holy Gospel in their hands and, misinterpreting it, catch people with it for their own perdition. . . .

Is there a sermon in the books that they did not misrepresent? Is there anything in this world created by God that they did not mock? Not only the earth but even the heaven they defame, saying that it was all done by Satan's will. The sky, the sun, the stars, the air, the earth, man, the church, and the crosses: everything that is God's they attribute to the devil. In general, everything that is on earth, alive or lifeless, they call devilish.

[On abstention] As they hear God in the Gospels telling the parable of the two sons, they believe that the older son is Christ and the younger one, who deceived his father, the devil. They call him Mamon themselves. They also call him creator and manager of the earthly creatures; he had commanded people to marry, to eat meat, and to drink wine. In general, they slander everything that is ours and they proclaim themselves denizens of heaven, but people who marry and live secular lives they call servants of Mamon. Disgusted by all this, they reject it not out of abstention as we would do, who do not count it for repulsive. . . .

This is why, oh Christ-loving people, even if you see the heretics casting out demons, curing blind ones, or resurrects dead ones, do not believe them! For the Lord said: "I will make portents and miracles to seduce the chosen ones, if possible." If your father or mother, your brother, or your son joins the heretics and does not listen to you after you admonish them once or twice, cast them out and hate them!

[On baptism and children] Look, brothers, the extent to which the devil infected them: they reject the holy baptism and are disgusted with baptized babies! If they happen to see a young child they find it as repulsive as bad odor, turn aside, spit, and cover themselves although it is they who are foul smell for angels and men. Even when they aim to deceive, saying, as is their custom, "We are Christians," do not trust them, for they lie just like their father, the devil. And how could they call themselves Christian, when they have no priests to baptize them; when the very sign of the cross they do not respect; when they do not write down the prayers of the priests and do not defer to them? If a priest anywhere falls for their faith, he completely forsakes ours; and if he happens to keep [the orthodoxy] he does it out of fear of the secular lords. His mind and his love are far away from the law that was handed down to the holy churches. . . .

[On miracles] The heretics try to demolish everything that the holy apostles built and taught with so much labor. Rightly speaks the divine David about them, saying: “The enemies of the Lord who are now famous and full of pride will disappear like smoke.” How could they not be enemies of God and the people if they do not believe in God’s miracles? They call the devil creator, but do not acknowledge the miracles of Christ. When they hear the Gospels speak laud and clear about the Lord’s miracles they misinterpret the sermon for their own perdition. They say that Christ neither healed the blind nor made whole the lame nor did He restore the dead to life. These are only tales and fables, because, they say, the evangelists were mistaken on the issue of healing the handicapped. They do not believe that five loaves of bread fed the people in the desert. They say: these were not loaves, but the four evangelists and the Deeds of the Apostles. Let us sum up: they got the wrong end of everything, for their own downfall.

[On their prayer] Their deception calls for countless prayers. They bow four times during the day and four times during the night, shutting themselves up in their rooms but keeping all the five doors open²⁵ although it is commanded that they ought to be closed. At prayer, they say “Our Father Who Are in Heaven.” But even for that they should be condemned because they call the creator of Heaven and earth Father, but His creature they count for the creature of the devil. They do not cross their face when praying . . .

Who taught you to fast, to work, and to avoid prayer on Sunday, the day of Christ’s resurrection? You say: this was ordained by humans, the Gospel does not mention it. Why don’t you honor the holidays of the Lord and the memory of the holy martyrs and fathers?

Such are the ruses of their deception; this is the sign of their downfall. I will not recount the rest of the words of their disgusting doctrine for these are certain imaginary fables. It becomes more to them to tell such stories because there are mindless. If they had any sense left, they would not have taught that most holy Mother of God sinned; if they had any sense, they would not have called the devil the creator of heaven and earth; if they had any sense, they would not say that the holy cross is enemy of God; if they had any sense they would not have slandered the saintly ranks which He handed down to the church; if they had any sense, they would not have called deception the miracles

²⁵ The senses.

worked over the holy relics, when they hear what the Lord says: “Whoever believes in me will perform the miracles I make, and even greater ones.” Not wishing to glorify the saints, the heretics blaspheme against God’s miracles. . . .

If someone asked them: “Is that is what you do and speak?” they will deny it and will swear: “No, we are not what you think about us!” They deny their practices and prayers so much that no one would think they are doing something wrong. . . .

They call the churches crossroads, and the liturgy and the other services that are performed in them, garrulity.

[On labor] But know now the words with which they capture the simple souls. They say: it is not meet to work, to labor on earth for God said, do not be concerned what you will eat and what you will drink, nor what will clothe you; all this is the pagan people’s concern. For that reason some of them don’t care to work, don’t want to do nothing with their hands, move from house to house and eat the fortune of someone else who has been deceived by them. . . .

[On power and the authorities] The heretics subject themselves to double condemnation by spreading another doctrine, because they are the new apostles and precursors of the Antichrist and because they prepare the people to welcome the son of perdition. They slander the rich and teach theirs not to obey their lords; they hate the tsar and disparage the elders; they think that all those who work for the tsar are hateful in the eyes of God and order all servants to stop working for their masters. . . .

[On confession] I will tell you another heretical fable, with which the devil, who hates the people, catches them. . . .

The heretics confess and absolve one another, although satanic chains bind them. Not only men, but women do that too, which is something worthy of condemnation. . . .

Do not, therefore, render your holy doctrine to the dissenting dogs; do not spill your pearls to the swine. If, by hearing these holy words they repent and give up their heretical deception, accept them with joy, but be on your guard against false repentance rather than a sincere one, for they are very mendacious and hide their thought at the bottom of their hearts.

[On monastic life] But if you, brother, oppose these words and say, “Those who live in this word cannot be saved, for they have wives and children to take care of, are forced to help in the work of the earthly magnates, suffer from the depredations of the troops, and are oppressed

by the elders,” you should know this: you are quite ignorant and this is why you speak like that. . . .

If you spend your days working for the earthly magnates as you say, or, if misery, the commands of men, or something else prevents you from praying to God, do not blame the former, but fulfill your tasks even more diligently, for you can expect to receive an appropriate remuneration for your work from God, as we already explained this from the holy books. Besides, you have as much time during the night as you do during the day. Divide it as you wish and dedicate one part of the time for the rest of your body and another for prayer to God. . . .

For we all strayed away from You: some in heresy, some in robbery, some in feud, others in lechery, some in wrongful accusations and hatred between brothers, some in pride and sloth, some in drunkenness, unlawful games and other sins, which we forsook through the holy baptism. And we consider You, who sees and knows all that, ignorant of it; we invent lies and we are deeply steeped in iniquity; we work more for the belly than for You; we abandoned the heavenly and tend toward the earthly; the houses of the rich are more to our liking than churches: there we flock, like vultures on a carcass expecting more help from them than from You, forgetting and trampling on what was written: “It is better to trust in God than to count on the magnates.” And when we do go to church, what ridicule we make of ourselves! A man stands in there, but his thoughts wander away, or focus on something wholly indecent. . . .

[Further on monks] We hear that among ours there are good monks who get deceived by the lawful marriage and do not do what is necessary for the salvation of those who live on this earth, that is, in the secular world. Others, who wander away and do not cut their hair according to the law, go to Jerusalem, still others to Rome, and other cities. As they get their fill of travel, they come back to their homes, contrite on account of their mindless labors. Some of them even take wives, becoming the butt of laughter of the people. Others don’t take the monastic garb off their shoulders, even though they think of it least of all. Yet others visit one house after another and seized by fits of garrulity, never close their mouths, describing in length what has happened in foreign lands wishing in this manner to gain people’s esteem. There are others who do even worse than that. . . .

All this I am saying not to slander monasticism, God forbid, because all those [who reside] in God’s law are holy. . . .

But if you want to be a monk, and if you take Jesus Christ's cross, stay put! Because taking God's cross means to deny yourself and walk with God, to bear with fortitude and without despair the afflictions sent by God or by people and not to accuse the one who afflicted you; not to be envious or jealous, not to be sly, and to be on your guard against any evil deed, word, or thought. "Whoever wishes," He said, "to come with me in the Kingdom of Heaven, let him deny himself, take his cross, and walk after me...".

But I am rich, he says: I wish to labor in the cloister and save my soul by living in deprivation; here, in the world, I cannot be saved. The apostle says: "Do not love this world and the things that are of it..."

Everything in this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride, is from this world, not from God. That is why, man, whether you enter the monastery or flee to the desert, as long as you carry those lusts and do not cast them out, you will wander mindlessly and in vain. Many were lost to perdition in the deserts and in the mountains, for they had things of this world on their minds, but many, who lived with wives in cities, were saved. The holy apostles and the Lord Himself, as He walked in the world, instructed us that such lusts be avoided. The brave man will be known when he kills the enemy. The Lord allows sufferings to burden his servants so that they can overcome them and shine even brighter. Gold is brighter when heated in the fire. We cannot work the golden or silver vessel unless we put it on the anvil and smite it with the heavy hammer. That is why you, if you wish to be vessels of your Lord, but were worn out by sin, and were not renewed by tears nor were you improved by repentance, come to your senses, wake up, seek the intercessor who will show you the road to the Kingdom of Heaven. We are not born to serve our bellies but to serve God. That is why I, the sinner of God, pray to you: as we see so many tribulations caused by war and so many evils on this earth because of our sins, let each and everyone of us ponder this, saying: Is it because of me that God sent down this war on earth? And let each and everyone of us make ready, for we do not know in what hour the thief of souls will come...

Many of those who enter the monastery cannot endure prayers and labors but flee and return like dogs to their vomit. Others, despairing, sin even worse than that. They wander restlessly from city to city, eating other men's bread without benefit. And because they are free from prayers and work, they live their days in pursuit of feasts, for they are servants not of God but of their bellies...

This is why, brothers, even if you are in the world and live in riches, listen to what the blessed Paul said to Timothy: “Instruct the wealthy of this world not to get puffed up nor to count on their unstable riches but to trust in the living God, who gives us all in plentitude to enjoy it good works to do; to enrich themselves with good, generous deeds, to be generous and sociable, and in this manner collect the property that will be the foundation of the future life, the eternal life.” Do you see now that wealth is not a bad thing if well managed?...

If someone who seeks to escape poverty enters the monastery and as he cannot maintain his children escapes from them he is not going there because he seeks the divine love or because he wants to serve God but because he wants to rest and indulge his belly. Such person is an apostate and worse than a pagan, as the apostle said, and is the cause of many curses. For his orphaned children, dying of hunger and suffering from cold in winter, curse him as they cry, saying: “Why did our father sire us, and our mother abandon us to such suffering and such calamities?”...

We see others as well, roaming with their hairs all messed up and their body uncared for. They are like hypocrites and, according to the words of the Lord, will loose their wages.

There are those who speak back to those who instruct them, and do not obey but count themselves among the great luminaries. They say: “But what about Anthony, Sava, and the other fathers, did they not flee to the desert?” We respond: Indeed, brother, you have thought it out, and you will begin the labors, but did you think whether you would be able to endure their afflictions? Because not only did they have not rest for an hour, but suffered greatly from vicious phantoms. Their fasts, too, were great torments. Who will relate their thirst for water, their earthly agonies? And you, as you dedicate yourself to the same torments, put yourself on trial, sit in your room for at least three years, teaching your soul to endure the trials which our Lord Jesus Christ took on Himself on our account. If someone speaks evil of you do not allow anger to leave your mouth through words. If someone does you violence, do not hold a grudge against him. The spiritual fast will serve you better than the fleshly one. Do not rejoice when your enemy suffers and do not grieve when your brother gets wealthier by the hour. Let the name of God not leave your heart. As you eat, as you drink, or as you do something else, always say: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me!” All this should be done secretly. And if you see that you have perfected yourself in this, be on your guard against the cunning and scheming

demon so that the pernicious thought that you are great does not get hold of your heart. And if you're told that you are now illustrious and you have delighted God, think about your early sins, saying: "Even if the merciful Lord has forgiven my sins for the sake of the endless Kingdom of God I will suffer double pains." Or, if you are called to remember the many sins you committed in your youthful years say, "My Lord Jesus Christ has come to pardon the sinners...".

If you see that you are strong enough to endure all torments, then enter the monastery and for Christ's sake submit yourself to your abbot. Deny your own will completely and fulfill his will for as long as you live. Respect the abbot like the Lord and the brethren like the apostles and do not allow your heart to seek neither Rome nor Jerusalem. Stay in your cell and do the prayers the abbot enjoined upon you. There, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will come to you, with His Father and the Holy Spirit, bringing along Peter and Paul and the other saints that you are looking for in distant places. And you will see that they would be not only in the cell but in your heart as well, as [Christ] Himself promised to come, together with His Father, to such [people] and make His dwelling in them...

But if it happens that the place gets devastated by armed invasion or for another reason, go where the Lord leads you and shows you a place, settle there, and do as you did before. The Lord will not let the souls of the righteous starve. Like a fish out of the water, a monk out of the cloister will perish. And just like the hen makes addle eggs as it leaves its eggs all too often, the monks who often leave the cloister indulging their will forget the service enjoined upon them. All this was written down by the holy fathers, so that the obedient get saved...

There are also those, and I believe I can call them crazy, who kick against the scriptures. Wishing to live as they see fit, they build dwellings for themselves, leaving their own without reason, and there indulge their habits. They want to glorify themselves on earth and that is what happens. Enriching themselves in the flesh, not in the spirit, they revert to their old ways. They go back like the pig to the mud, according to the Scripture: they dress up and strut about before those who follow them. Who in their right mind will not be grieved to see them doing this? Even though they are like that, they chastise not themselves but us, who are writing this! And who will account for the violence they visit upon the powerless? They read books and know the law of monasticism, but do commit offenses and deeds against the law. They put forward their justice, but do not submit to the Lord's justice. Woe

to them! The prophet said, "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and prudent according to themselves!"...

When they were lay people and lived in iniquity they used to say: "When we become monks, we will do penance for that." But when they take on this great angelic image, they keep their old ways and customs so that the words said about them become true: "It would have been better for them not to have known the truth than to have deviated from the holy order after they have been acquainted with it." It is on their account that people hate the good and lawfully living monks....

As for their food and their feasts and other similar things it is impossible to speak, for on their table they have as many different meals as wealthy laymen. They are noisy, and now insult one another, now reconcile; all this against the law. As soon as they stop quarreling, they get drunk, making up in the name of wine, not in the name of God....

Others shut themselves up in their cells and there live as they wish, fattening themselves as pigs in a pigsty. All they need is alms. Because of that, they despise the monastic law, do not obey the abbot, do not want to work, and cannot spend even a day in peace with the monks. They try to pass for decent [men] and bequeath us laws and rules of their own making; absolve from sin at confession and commit other mindless acts that make them the ones in need of absolution. They are full with presumption, the thing God hates and despises most of all. They think they are great and holy, that all other people are lower than them, and that they are the only ones who please God. As they reside in the cloister, they manage the houses of others, forgetting their own home; often do they buy, sell, and manage fields and meadows....

And other mindless deeds they do, sending out all kinds of tales and books, ordering that these be dispatched even to foreign countries, if possible....

I know of other fathers as well, to who truly deserve the name of monks. Even their look tells that they are angels of God. Their words are like light for the soul, they reside in mountains like angels in Heaven, and they live accordingly. They praise God continuously, do not care for riches, nor do they adorn themselves with glittering attires, but live as if immersed in the fire of hell and perceiving God coming down for the final judgment. Who can account for their many willing tears and trials?

Others wander, as Paul says, in mountains and caves, depriving themselves of the goods of this world. To them, this world has no worth. They reside two or three together, with one soul, carrying Christ among

themselves, according to the Scripture. And if it becomes necessary for one of them to be in the city or at the market, they do what they have to, covering their faces and looking down. They do that not because they are disgusted by women like the heretics, but because of their great humility they consider themselves unworthy to look people in the eye. They steer clear of all wickedness, accuse and pass judgment on themselves, and with the sign of the true cross they sanctify both the inner and the outer man. And if someone recognizes them, they flee human glory like fire, because they know what has been written: “Whatever men esteem highly is the lowest thing for God.” Who can recount all of their good works?

As for you, man, if you wish to embrace monasticism, here, we showed you all the roads to salvation. If you tried your soul and if your heart is strong for all trials and for the above mentioned torments, then run with joy to the heroic deed that expects you keeping in mind the fountain and the seal of the faith, Jesus.

But be cautious of poison: are you leaving your wife without having taken care of your children; are you leaving the world without having instructed them in fear of God and without having arranged for their lives? It is a Christian’s obligation to instruct all those who live in his house in fear of God because he will be answerable for them before God’s court.

If you flee the world because you think it has been polluted and attack life with a woman [saying that] those who live like that cannot be saved, you are not far from the thinking of the heretics. Because they too, teach that married life is polluted and that eating meat and drinking wine separate us from God. They are deceiving themselves. We find none of this in the holy books. At the holy councils the holy fathers cursed above all those who despise the world of God and the written instructions, saying: “To all those who disparage [people] who eat meat or drink responsibly, or wear glittering clothes, such [people] will not gain salvation, anathema!” It is our duty to follow the advice of those who know, for otherwise our labors will be in vain and for no purpose. . . .

[On rich men] There are some among the wealthy who take pride in their eloquence and because of their madness behave arrogantly with the poor. They think they are immortal and do not remember that “Just like you he too, is a creature of God’s hand. . . .”

[On reading books] You are rich; you have everything, the Old and the New Testament, as well as other books full with enlightening

sermons and all kinds of instruction. And you yourself are know-it-all. But one thing you have not yet learned: to sacrifice your soul for your brethren. Why are you closing the road to salvation before the eyes of men by hiding the divine scriptures from your brothers? They were written not to be consumed by mould and eaten by worms, but for the salvation of your brothers. If you have read in some of them that the divine words have to be concealed from your brothers they truly deserve not only mould and worms but fire as well. Such books will indeed burn in the eternal fire if they teach contrary to God and His saints. No, man, do not conceal the divine scriptures from those who desire to read and copy them. You yourself are reading them secretly to be able to prevail over your brother in dispute. But you will not be saved and will cause many people's perdition, because you introduce spiritual emptiness in the world. Do you see now what a great evil is ignorance and the neglect of books? Read the holy books often to wipe out your sins. For the water drop, dripping, often digs out the stone.

Many people rather hurry to games than to church, and are fonder of soothsayers and tall tales than of books. Those who do that cannot properly be called Christians. Because those who drink wine, play the rebecs, dance and sing demonic songs, and believe in apparitions and dreams and all kind of satanic teachings are not Christians. Whoever follows some else's will, he is the latter's servant. Satan taught [such people] all that. This is why if some of you do such things they should not be called Christians. And where does all this come from? Is it not from the neglect of books and the laziness of the priests?...

[On bishops] Oh, you shepherds of God's sheep endowed with speech, you who take wool and milk from the flock but take no care of the sheep! What answer shall we give before the Lord's court, how will we account before the great shepherd of the shepherds, who said through the mouth of the prophet: "If you do not pull out from the chasm of sin the one who falls in it his blood will be on your hands and I will seek it, said the Lord."

The bishop is obligated to supervise the priest and to instruct the people with whom he had been entrusted, but above all he has to steer clear of all evil...

And from where do these wolves come, the heretical teachings? Is it not because of the laziness and the ignorance of the shepherds? From where do robbers and the thieves come, that is to say, sins and iniquities? Is it not because the bishops do not instruct? But how will God's

word be fulfilled by an ignorant man who does not know the Law and now becomes a lawgiver through a bribe, which is new idolatry?

I repeat: Listen, you shepherds, and keep you flock safe. Teach it with meekness and guide it with love. Listen, you elders of the shepherds, and do not cease to educate the people entrusted to you. Do not burry the talent in food, do not hide God's pearl in wine!

Hearken to these words, bishops, for how good it is to care for the flock entrusted to us so that we are worthy of the gifts promised to us!

The bishop and the priest would avail nothing if he only fasts until his neck withers, as the Scripture says, but does not instruct the people entrusted to him in the fear of God.

Emulate the fathers and bishops who served in your offices in earlier days, namely Gregory, Basil, John, and others, whose names scare the demons away. Who will account for their cares and travails and what they went through on account of [their] people? Angels and men rejoice at remembering them.

Emulate the new presbyter Ioan, known to many of you, the one who was shepherd and *exarch* in Bulgaria.²⁶ Do not say: "This cannot happen in our time." God can do it, if we ask. You know how to live in God's house, in God's church.

Anti-heretical inscription of the monk Ananius, tenth century (?).

83

Edition: Ivsan Goshev, *Starobalgarski glagolicheski i kirilski nadpisi* (Sofia, 1961), 80–82.

Whoever reads let him curse the heretic and if does not curse him let him be cursed... If he curses the heretic let...God have mercy on him...written by Ananius the monk.

Secret Book of the Bogomils, *tenth century*.

84

The book was originally written in Old Bulgarian and translated into Latin as Bulgarian Bogomils who fanned out West after the conquest of the country by Byzantium found a fertile soil for spreading their unorthodox beliefs in Northern Italy and Southern France. Edition of the Latin text: Jordan Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi* (Sofia, 1925), 73–87. Partial translation into English: *MB*, 187–202.

²⁶ It is possible that Kosmas refers to Ioan Exarch, the "new John" compared to John Chrysostomos.

I am Ioan, a brother of yours who took part in the sorrows to partake of the Kingdom of Heaven and the patience of Jesus Christ. At the Last Supper, as I reclined on the chest of our Lord Jesus Christ, I spoke to Him: "Lord, who is the one who will betray you?" And He responded, saying: "The one who dips in the plate with me. Then Satan will enter him and he will wish to betray me."

Then I asked: "Lord, before Satan fell down, what was his glory before Your Father?" "He had," He answered, "such a glory that he commanded the heavenly virtues. I, however, sat by my Father. Satan arranged all things in imitation of Father; he descended from Heaven to Hell and ascended from Hell to the throne of the invisible Father. Observing the glory of the One who moves the heavens, he designed to put his seat over the clouds and desired to become like the Most High. Descending to the air, he said to the angel of air, "Open the gate of air for me!" and he opened the gate of air. Then, as he continued going down, he encountered the angel of waters, and told him, "Open the gates of water for me," and he opened for him. Descending farther, he reached the face of the earth, coved by water. Transcending beneath the earth he happened across two fishes reposing on the water, linked together like oxen for plowing and supporting the entire earth from sundown to sunset on the command of the invisible Father. And going down even farther, he found low clouds that supported the sea and then his hell, that is, the species of fire. He could go no further on account of the fierce flame. Then Satan, full with hatred, went back to the angel of air and the one that was over the waters, and told them: "All this is mine; If you obey me I will set my seat in the clouds and will be like the Most High, and as I lift some of the waters on that firmament and gather others in wide seas, there will be no more water on the entire surface of the earth and I will reign with you for all ages." He said this to the angels and ascended to the other angels up to the Fifth Heaven, saying to everyone: "How much do you owe your Lord?" The first one said: "One hundred measures of wheat." And Satan said to him "Take a stylus and black ink and write: sixty." And he said to the second: "And you, how much do you owe your Lord?" He answered: "One hundred containers of oil." And [Satan] said "Sit dawn and write: fifty." So, ascending to all the heavens, he said the same up to the Fifth Heaven, seducing the angels of the invisible Father.

And a voice came out of the throne of the Father, saying: "What do you do, apostate from the Father, seducer of angels? You, creator of sin, do quickly what you have in mind!" Then the Father ordered

His angels, saying: “Take their clothes!” And they took the vestments and the crowns of all the angels who listened to him.”

And I inquired with the Lord: “When Satan fell, where did he settle?” And He responded to me: “My Father transformed him because of his pride, and took the light away from him, and his face resembled liquid iron and was entirely like the face of a man; with his tail he dragged a third of God’s angels and was ejected from the seat of God and deprived of the management of the heavens. As Satan descended to this firmament he found no peace, nor did those with him. Then he pleaded with the Father, saying: “Be patient with me and I will return everything to Thee.” Father had mercy on him and gave leave to him and those who were with him do what he wanted for seven days. Satan sat on the firmament and commanded the angel who was over the air and the one who was over the water and they lifted up the earth and it became dry. Then he took the crown of the angel who was over the water and made from one half of it the light of the moon and from the other the light of the stars, and from the precious stones he made the army of the stars.

After that he made the angels his servants in the order and according to the command of the Most High and invisible Father. [And he made] thunder, rain, hail, and snow, and set his servant-angels over them, and ordered the earth to produce all birds and reptiles and threes and grasses, and ordered to sea to produce fish and birds in the sky.

Then he thought and made man in the likeness of himself and ordered the angel of the Third Heaven to enter a clay body. And he took from him and made another body in the shape of woman and ordered the angel of the Second Heaven to enter the body of the woman. The angels, seeing themselves in mortal shapes, and different ones at that, began to weep. He ordered them to copulate in their clay bodies and [they] did not understand this was sin. The creator of evil devised in his mind to make a paradise and install the humans there, and ordered that they be brought in. The Devil then planted reed in the middle of paradise and out of his spit made a serpent and ordered it to enter the reeds and thus concealed his design and they did not realize his deception. Then he entered and spoke to them, telling them: eat any fruit in paradise but the fruit of knowledge of good and evil you must not eat. In truth, he entered the iniquitous serpent and seduced the angel that was in female shape, and poured in his brother the concupiscence of sin, and [he] fulfilled his concupiscence with Eve under the song of the serpent. This is why those who do the concupiscence of the Devil,

their father, are called sons of the devil and the serpent, the end of this age. And again did the Devil pour his venom and his concupiscence in the angel who was in Adam and thus created the sons of the devil and the sons of the serpent to the end of this age.”

Then I, Ioan, inquired with the Lord, saying: “How come then, people say that Adam and Eve were created by God and put in paradise to serve [His] orders but when they disobeyed, they were delivered to death?” And the Lord told me: “Listen, Ioan, beloved of my Father. Ignorant people say that that my Father created clay bodies, while He created through the Holy Spirit all heavenly virtues, but because of their disobedience they received clay bodies and were delivered to death.” Then I, Ioan, asked the Lord again: “How come a man of spirit dwells in a corporeal body?” And the Lord said to me: “The angels falling from the heavens enter the body of women and accept flesh from the fleshly concupiscence and are born, spirit from spirit and flesh from flesh, and thus consummate the reign of Satan in this world and among all the people.”

And I, Ioan, asked the Lord, saying: “Until when will Satan reign over humankind?” And He said to me: “My Father permitted him to reign for seven days, that is, seven ages.” And I asked the Lord and said: “What will it be like during that time?” And He said to me: “When the Devil fell from the glory of Father and lost his glory he sat above the clouds and sent out his servant-angels like burning flames to the humans, from Adam to Enoch, servant of his. He lifted Enoch up above the firmament, displayed his divine essence to him, ordered a stylus and ink brought to him and [he] sat and wrote seventy seven books. And he ordered Enoch to bring them back to earth and give them to his sons. Enoch brought the books to earth and gave them to his sons and began to teach them to perform sacrifices and illicit mysteries and thus hid the Kingdom of Heaven from humankind. And he told them: You see, I am your God, and there is no other God but me. Then my Father sent me to the world so that humans notice and realize the evil design of the Devil. And when he figured out that I had descended from Heaven to earth, he sent an angel and [he] took three pieces of wood and gave them to Moses so that they crucify me; and these are still kept for me. But he [the angel] proclaimed the divinity to his people and ordered [Moses] to give laws to the sons of Israel and led them as if over [land through] the middle of the sea.

When my Father devised to send me into the world, He sent an angel of His before me, by the name of Mary, to accept me. And I,

descending, entered through the one ear and exited through the other. Satan, the prince of this world, found out that I had come down to seek the salvation of the people who had been perishing, and sent his angel the prophet Elias, who baptized with water and whose name was John the Baptist. But Elias inquired with the prince of this world: “How will I know him?” Then [his] lord said: “Over whom you see the Spirit descending like a dove and hovering above him, this is him who baptizes in the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins, him who can destroy and save.”

Then again I, Ioan, asked the Lord: “Is it possible that a man be saved by John’s baptism, without your baptism?” And the Lord answered: “If I do not baptize for the remission of sins, through baptism with water no one will see the Kingdom of Heaven, for I am the bread of life that descended from the Seventh Heaven and whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood will be called sons of God.” And I inquired with the Lord: “What is this, to eat my flesh and drink my blood?” He responded: “Before the Devil and his army fell from the glory of Father, they used to praise Him and pray to Him in this manner: “Our Father Who Are in Heaven” and all their songs floated before the throne of my Father. But when they fell, they were not able to praise God with that prayer.”

And again did I ask the Lord: “How come everyone accepts the baptism of Ioan, but Yours not everyone accepts?” At this he said to me: “Because their deeds are evil and do not reach the light. Ioan’s disciples marry and attend weddings; my disciples do not marry and are like God’s angels in Heaven.” I said: “If it is truly sin to be with a woman, then man should not marry?” The Lord said to me: “Not everyone can understand this but only those to whom it is granted. There are eunuchs who are like this while still in the bosom of their mothers; there are eunuchs whom people castrated; and there are those who castrate themselves for the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever can comprehend that, let him comprehend.”

Then I asked the Lord about Judgment Day: “What would be the sign that announce to us Your Coming?” The Lord answered, saying: “When the number of the righteous becomes equal to the number of the fallen crowns Satan will be freed from his prison and, full with wrath, will open war on the righteous, who will call out laud to the Lord. Immediately, the Lord will order the archangel to blow the trumpet and the archangel’s trumpet’s voice will be heard from Heaven to Hell. Then the sun will darken, the moon will not send out its light, the stars

will fall, the four winds will leave their hideouts and shake up the earth, the sea, the mountains, and the hills, the sky will tremble violently, the sun will be shaded and will shine till the fourth hour. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear and all the holy angels [will be] with Him and He will place his seat over the clouds and will sit down on the throne of His Greatness together with the twelve apostles [sitting on] the twelve seats of His Glory. The books will be opened and He will sit in judgment over the entire universe on account of the faith that He preached. Then the Son of Man will send out His angels to gather His chosen ones from the four corners of the world, from the heights of Heaven even to their ends, and they will bring them in. Then the Son of God will send the evil demons to bring to him all peoples and will tell them: "Come, all of you who said: Let us eat and drink and get the reward of this world." Then all peoples will be brought in and they will stand, trembling, before the Judge's throne. The Books of Life will be opened and the peoples' impiety will be exposed; the righteous will be lauded for their patience, good works, honor, honesty, and obedience to the angelic orders. As for the impious, divine wrath will be visited upon them and they will be seized with grief and sorrow. Then the Son of God will select His chosen ones and separate them from the sinners and will say to them: "Come, blessed of my Father, to inherit the Kingdom prepared for you at the creation of the world." And to the sinners He will say: "Away from me, cursed ones, go to the eternal fire that the devil and his servants have prepared." And they will be excommunicated and thrown in Hell. On the order of the invisible Father the infidel spirits will leave their prisons. Then my voice will be heard and there will be one flock and one shepherd. From the deepest parts of the earth darkness will emerge, the darkness of the fiery Hell. It will darken the universe below all the way to the firmament of air and the Lord will be in the firmament even to the lowest parts of the earth. And if a thirty-year old man takes up a rock and throws it, the rock will reach the bottom in three years: such is the depth of the burning lake where the sinners will dwell. Then Satan will be bound with all of his army and they will be thrown in the burning lake. The Son of God and His chosen ones will walk on the heavenly firmament, will shut up the devil, tying him with strong, unbreakable chains and the crying and whiling sinners will say: "Gobble us up, oh earth, so that death finishes us off!" Then the righteous ones will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father and the Son of God will lead them before the throne of the invisible Father, saying: "Here I am: I and my

children given to me by God. The world did not recognize Thee, but I did recognize you in the truth, for it was Thou who sent me.” Then the Father will respond to His Son, saying: “Beloved Son of Mine, sit at my right side as your enemies prostrate themselves under your feet, the ones who did not recognize me and said: “We are gods and there are no other gods but us;” those who killed Thee prophets, persecuted your righteous ones and exiled them to the outer darkness. There will be crying and gnashing of teeth. Then the Son of God will sit down at the right side of the Father and the Father will order His angels and the righteous ones who will join the chorus of the angels, will clothe them in indestructible vestments, will give them crowns that will not fade and immovable seats, and God will dwell among them. There will be no more hunger and thirst nor will the sun or another heat burn them. God will wipe out all the tears from their eyes and the Son of God will reign with His Holy Father for all ages.”

This is the secret book full of deceptions of the heretics from Concorezzo, brought over from Bulgaria by Nazarius its bishop.

Political Ideology

Ioan Exarch on power and legitimacy, excerpts from the Hexaameron, late ninth or early tenth century.

85

Ioan Exarch was the premier writer in the capital of Preslav during the “Golden Age” of Bulgarian letters under the patronage of Tsar Simeon. A prolific and well-read author, he put together encyclopedic collections and dozens of sermons on the fundamentals of the Christian faith. He was close to the reigning dynasty and the width and depth of his knowledge suggest that he was educated in Byzantium, perhaps together with Prince Simeon during his stay in Constantinople. He preferred a rather free adaptation of his Byzantine originals in place of literal translation. The exact meaning of his title is uncertain, but it seems to imply a position of general supervision of all the affairs of the fledging Bulgarian church, a job that required a good deal of literary activity as well. Ioan Exarch was the right man for the job. Some time after 893 he compiled two of the fundamental Bulgarian ecclesiastical works in the vernacular: the exegetical compendium *Theology (Heavens)* and the voluminous *Hexaameron*, which sums up Christian cosmogony. Although most of his work is translations and compilations, here and there he left snippets of original thought that betray an intelligent and disciplined mind, deeply involved in the development of a strong native tradition in the arts and sciences, but just as interested in forging the political ideology of Christian Bulgaria and extolling the greatness and legitimacy of the power of his master Simeon. The fragment below is a sample of that approach. Edition: Rudolf Aitzetmüller,

Das Hexaemeron des Exarchen Johannes, 7 vols. (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1958–1975).

Sire, let the Creator and Artist without paragon enlighten your heart, oh great Christ-lover, Tsar Simeon, and the hearts of all your men and subjects. Let Him grant you to learn and understand, to the extent that it is humanly possible, the work of His artful design, and arm you with His commandments, which illuminate the eyes of wisdom.

...

However, if the simple folk who live outside of the capital have a chance to catch a glimpse of the prince artfully painted with colors on the wall—dressed in his gold-woven mantle, wearing a golden necklace, girded with a velvet belt, his shoulders sprinkled with pearls, girded with a golden sword—if they could only see him in such vestments, they will marvel, and as they think about it, they will say: “If his image is so amazing, how much greater should he be in reality!”

Let me illustrate what I say with a parable: The prince, when he heads to war or someplace else, leaves a deputy behind himself to dispense justice and exercise power. When he comes back, the deputy divests himself from these powers. The prince can do this many times, setting up the deputy and then deposing him, for the deputy obeys him like a slave and the prince remains the ruler and loses nothing of his power by being away. Just like this the light rules over the air with its radiance...

Now, in many countries one becomes a tsar, a prince, or a king by inheriting; not according to the movements of the Zodiac and the stars, but by kinship and inheritance. According to the order, the son rules after his father and the brother after his brother, as it was in the time of David, who was the one to establish this among the Hebrew tribe. Among the Persians, the practice was the same even at the time of Zerubbabel. Among the Lydians this obtained from Cyrus to Darius and even to the last ones, among the Lydians from Kandaval to Zidogug, and from him, to Croesus. Power is transmitted within the family among the Bulgarians: from the very beginning princes inherited from their fathers and from their brothers. We hear that the Khazars do the same...²⁷

²⁷ Ioan adds this to justify Boris’ coup against Rasate and Simeon’s taking over from his brother.

Some of those [creatures] not capable of speech are sociable, which is something characteristic of the manner of life that shares a common goal and all activities of whom are for a common objective, as it can be observed among the bees. For they share a home, go out together, and work together. The greatest marvel is that they are all under the power of one tsar, the highest ranking, and only take to work, collecting flower nectar, when they see their sovereign, that is, their mother, take to flight. Their tsar is not put in power through the choice of many, for many times the multitude puts in power the wickedest. Nor does he get to rule on the casting of the die, for the bad luck of the die often bestows power on the worse. Nor does he receive power from his father, because such ones, on account of having lived in luxury and flattery are not raised properly and are frequently dumb and incapable of discerning the truth. By nature, the tsar of the bees is larger than the rest and surpasses them bodily, in kind, and in virtue. The tsar of the bees possesses a sting in order to punish with it. For there is an unwritten law, established by nature herself: the one who possesses great power should not punish [arbitrarily], but should be moderate in punishment. But even among the bees the one that does not want to follow the example of the tsar, that is, the mother, is promptly subjected to punishment and dies from the piercing sting . . .

If a *smerd*²⁸ or a poor man, or a stranger, catches a glimpse from far away of the towering walls of the princely residence, he is astonished. And as he approaches the gates, he marvels and asks questions. As he enters, he sees towering buildings on both sides, adorned with stone and embellished with wood and other things. But when he comes into the citadel and beholds the tall palaces and the churches, richly decorated with stone, wood, and paint, and on the inside with marble, copper, silver, and gold, he knows not to what he should compare them, for he has seen nothing in his land but straw-covered huts. The poor one is so amazed that he goes out of his mind!

However, if he happens to see the prince—sitting in his mantle covered with pearls, with a golden necklace on his neck, girded with a velvet belt, with bracelets on his arms and a golden sword at his side, and the *bolgars* sitting around him with golden necklaces, belts, and bracelets—and then, when he goes back to his land, if someone asked

²⁸ Dependent peasant; the Bulgarian term might have been altered by the Old Russian transcriber.

him: “What did you see there?” he would say: “I don’t know how to account for this, because you can only comprehend such beauty and order if you see them with your own eyes. One has to see this with one’s own eyes and reflect on it with one’s incorporeal mind to be able to truly appreciate it. For one’s own eyes do not deceive; they might mislead but still they provide the truest [picture]. . . .

And from there the mind, the understanding and governing power of the incorporeal soul, like a truth-loving, incorruptible, and tough judge or, to put it simply, like a tsar, who sits on a high throne and is quick to grasp what he hears as well as what can be seen with the eyes, in an ascending trajectory grasps and discerns the nature of every thing so that, if it is good and useful, he can prudently accept it. Our double nature discerns in everything itself, distinguishes and attributes the immaterial to the immaterial and the material to the material and does not mix them so that it does not turn out that it is doing something unworthy of the power it possesses and thus destroys the imperial dignity of its sovereign power, and the mind demonstrates itself unjust and not articulated in constitution, division, and resolution.

- 86 Eulogy to Tsar Simeon, in *Simeon’s encyclopedic collection, tenth century*. Edition: *Izbornik velikogo knjaza Svjatoslava Jaroslavicha 1073 goda* (St Petersburg, 1880). Existing translation into English: *MB*, 139–142; Dujchev and Nikolov, *Kiril i Methodius*, 151–2.

Eulogy to Tsar Simeon

Simeon, great among the tsars,
 all-powerful sovereign and ruler,
 desired, out of great longing
 to reveal openly the secret thoughts
 in the depth of the most difficult books
 according to the interpretations of the wisest Basil,
 and commanded me, the fully ignorant,
 to make a change in the spoken form
 but strictly to keep to his thought.
 Them [the thoughts] like a working bee
 from every flower of the scripture
 he collected in his most wise heart,
 like honey-combs,
 and spilled them over like the sweetest honey
 from his mouth to the *bolians*,

to enlighten their thoughts.
 To them, he appears like a new Ptolemy,
 not in faith, but in striving.
 Most precious memory he
 created for himself with the
 gathering of the divine books
 with which he filled his palace.
 So that this memory remains for ever,
 let the wreath of the blessed and saintly men
 be the reward to his Christ-loving soul
 through the unending eternal ages. Amen.

Saints' Lives and Eulogies

Clement of Ohrid, Eulogy for Cyril the Philosopher, ninth century.

87

The *Eulogy for Cyril* is perhaps the peak of Clement's poetic production and one of the most exquisite products of Old Bulgarian literature. It is extant in two versions, a Bulgarian and a Russian, and is preserved in more than two dozens of copies. Editions: *BSM*, 328–33; and Angelov et al., eds., *Kliment Ohridski*, I, 426–8 and 438–40. Partial translation in English: *MB*, 85–97.

God bless! Lovers of Christ! Here shines for us the resplendent memory of our most blessed father Cyril, the new apostle and teacher of all the lands.

With his piety and beauty he shone above earth like the sun, enlightening the entire world through the radiance of God who is three in One. The Divine Providence built a temple in his heart; upon his tongue as if upon a cherub the Holy Spirit rested, who always grants gifts according to the strength of one's faith, as the apostle Paul said: "Each of us receives grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Did not the Lord Himself say, "I will love the one who loves me and I will appear to him; I will build my dwelling in him and he will be like a son to me, and I will be his Father."

Looking for such a fatherland, the most blessed father and teacher of ours abandoned the beauty of this world, that is, glory, home, and wealth as well as father and mother, brothers and sisters. Since his youth he was as pure as angel, steered clear and kept away from the delights of this life and spent his time in constant singing of psalms, praises of God and spiritual learning, following only the path that leads to Heaven. For that reason God's grace was poured into his mouth,

as the wisest Solomon put it: “Knowledge is on the lips of the wisest one and on his tongue he carries mercy and the law.” This is how our teacher shut the evil-bursting mouths of the heretics.

When the heresy appeared, in the time of the iconoclastic Theophilus²⁹ for many years the holy icons were persecuted, destroyed, and neglected. But under the faithful tsar Michael³⁰ the Orthodox convened a council and sent Cyril against these heretics; he demolished as if with fire their hatred with his spiritual powers. Leader of that heresy was Patriarch Anius,³¹ whom the Orthodox unmasked and drove away from the throne. You see the power of the teacher. Whenever he heard that the divine image has been slandered he flew as if on wings over countries and with clear words tore apart deception and taught the true faith. He completed what the apostle Paul left unfinished and soared like eagle above all the lands, from South to North and from East to West.

On behalf of the Orthodox faith he appeared at councils convened by the Khazars and the Saracens, shone as brightly as the sun with trice-bright brilliance and destroyed their empty doctrines.³² He destroyed the godless deception among the people of Phoula, the worship of a three-idol, which they called Alexander and worshipped like a god, offering sacrifices. The blessed father uprooted it. Lit up by the light of the Trinity that has no beginning he enlightened the people of Christ and instructed them in the correct faith. The light of the Trinity that has no beginning shone brightly [through him].³³

By the mercy and love of humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ he became the shepherd and teacher of the Slavic people, which wallowed deeply in ignorance and spiritual darkness. And just like Daniel shut the mouths of the lions, he shut the mouths of the wolves, the adherents of the three-languages heresy who, with minds darkened by envy, argued that “It is not appropriate that God is praised in any other language but Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.” Their hatred made them emulators

²⁹ Emperor Theophilus (829–842). Clement refers to the second period of iconoclasm before its suppression.

³⁰ Emperor Michael III (842–867). The veneration of icons was restored under the regency of his mother Theodora, at the council of 843.

³¹ Patriarch John VII Grammatikos of Constantinople (837–843).

³² Cyril’s Saracen mission took place either in 851 or in 856; the Khazar mission was most likely in 860–861. Both missions were officially led by Cyril’s brother Methodius, but Cyril provided intellectual power.

³³ The reference is to population settled in the Crimea; the name is perhaps after the city and bishopric of Phoula.

of Pilate. He destroyed their deception with clear arguments, fired up by the power of the Holy Spirit. He made clear the language of the stuttering, according to prophesy, and his books guided everyone on the path of salvation. He translated the ecclesiastical order from the Greek into the Slavic tongue and went to Rome, leading his chosen flock to perfection. The Lord God willed that his most honorable body rested in Rome.³⁴

When we take stock of his accomplishments, labors, and travel there is really no one else who can be similarly praised. Verily, even though he shone in later times, he surpassed everyone else. Just like the Morning Star, which comes up late, illuminates the entire sky spreading light with its luminous rays, so the most blessed father and teacher of our people who was brighter than the sun through the light of the Holy Trinity illuminated innumerable people sunk in the depth and darkness of ignorance. What place remained hidden, what place did he not illuminate with his steps? What art remained unknown to his blessed soul? He proclaimed to all peoples the secret mysteries, explicating them clearly with expressions easy to understand. To some he wrote, to others he preached; for the divine grace has been poured into his mouth. For this God blessed him forever.

But what mouth can express the sweetness of his teaching? What tongue can tell about his glorious deeds, his travails, and the goodness of his life? The Lord made his mouth shinier than light, to illuminate those darkened by the sinful deception. His tongue poured sweet and life-giving words. His most pure lips blossomed through the highest wisdom. His most virtuous fingers created spiritual limbs and adorned them with gold-shining letters. His God-praising mouth satiated those who thirsted for the divine wisdom. From it many inherited³⁵ and accepted life-creating nourishment. Through it God enriched many peoples with knowledge of the divinity and crowned with a divinely-woven wreath the multinational Slavic people, because for them was this apostle sent. From this mouth a source of live sermons sprang up to water our dried-up bareness; through it was tied up the blasphemous tongue of the heretics.

³⁴ The paragraph sums up the Moravian mission of Cyril and Methodius; the visit to Rome took place in 867–869. Cyril's body is still in Rome's basilica San Clemente, close to the old Lateran papal palace.

³⁵ The Kingdom of Heaven.

Thus, this most honest mouth appeared like a seraphim, praising God, and through it we knew the God of the Trinity, one in essence though divided in attributes and names, equally praised, the eternal Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit.

On account of this, oh most blessed father Cyril, blessed are your lips, which poured forth spiritual sweetness for my lips. Blessed is your tongue of many languages, through which the dawn of the eternal Trinity without beginning shone forth for my people and dispersed the sinful darkness. Blessed is your very shiny face, illuminated by the Holy Spirit through which the light of the knowledge of God dawned for my face and the polytheistic error was destroyed. Blessed are your gold-rayed eyes, through which the blindness of ignorance reigning over my eyes was shattered and the light of the knowledge of God shone through. Blessed are your angel-like pupils lit up by the divine glory that eliminated the blindness of my heart and enlightened me with God-inspired utterances. Blessed are your most honest hands through which the divine cloud of knowledge of God descended upon my people and watered with divine dewdrops our hearts charred by the draught of sin. Blessed are your God-moved fingers through which my people were set free from the sinful yoke. Blessed is your gold-gilded bosom from which life-giving water from on high poured forth for my people spurred by your prayers. Blessed are your resplendent feet, on which you, like the sun, speedily traversed the whole world, preaching the God-inspired doctrine. Blessed are your resplendent footsteps, through which our misguided steps learned the right way. Blessed is your most holy soul through which the sinful wounds of my soul healed and whose spiritual sermons implanted reason in our hearts. Blessed are your God-moved fingers through which the supreme divine wisdom, hidden from many, was written down to reveal the secrets of the divine knowledge. Blessed is your most honorable church, in which your wisest and God-exuding body reposes.

Blessed is the city that accepted this third instrument of the Divine Providence. For truly this blessed [father] appeared to bring to an end what the previous two supreme lights left unfinished. That is why the Lord God commanded that he finds most honorable rest with them. He passed away in the Lord in the year of the creation of the entire world 6377 [869] on the fourteenth day of the month of February. And as he completed all his labors and services, on account of his life and his faith, he joined the holy fathers. He became an angel with the

angels, an apostle with the apostles, and a prophet with the prophets, sharing God's glory with all the saints.

Together with them, oh saintly teacher, pray for us who celebrate your most glorious death for the glory of the most Holy Trinity of the Farther, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, always, and for ever. Amen.

Clement of Ohrid, Eulogy for Cyril and Methodius, tenth century.

88

The *Eulogy* is one of Clement's larger works and is a substantial source for the lives and deeds of the Slavic apostles. It is extant in several dozens of copies in two versions, the earlier in Russian manuscripts from the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, and the later in a Bulgarian collection from the fifteenth, and a Serbian from the sixteenth century. Although none of the manuscripts attributes the work to Clement the majority of scholars agree it is the product of his pen. The composition date is unclear; speculations that the *Eulogy* has to be dated in the late 880s or early 890s have not been proven. Editions: Angelov et al., eds., *Kliment Ohridski*, I, 468–75, 485–91, and 505–510.

When our God and Savior Jesus Christ, because of His great and indescribable love for humanity took mercy on humankind for He could not put up with the deception of the Devil, He voluntarily denigrated Himself and incarnated through the union of the Holy Spirit and the most pure and glorious Mother of God and always Virgin Maria. He appeared on earth and lived among the humans. When he resided in an image fully resembling our bodies the Lord sentenced sin through his flesh so that those who die because of Adam live in Jesus Christ. As the apostle says, He is our peace and He made one of the two people³⁶ and destroyed the barrier of the foe by demolishing the enemy through the cross. The Lord was the first among those who resurrected from the dead and He guided humankind Himself on the path of immortality. When He ascended to the High Heaven He sat at the right side of the throne of greatness. The Lord ordered humankind to go through a test and He will come in the last days to judge the quick and the dead and like a just judge will sentence everyone according to their deeds. God does not wish the death of the sinner but his repentance and betterment for every human is too much inclined to do evil. The merciful God did not abandon His creature and did not forget His hand's work but throughout the years chose men and showed their

³⁶ Ephesians 2:14–16; allegory on the union of Jews and gentiles in Christianity.

deeds and accomplishments to the humans so that they can emulate them and achieve eternal life. After that He chose the prophets, after the prophets the apostles, after the apostles the martyrs, the venerable, and the teachers. The same happened in our times. Did not the prophet say: “The blind will see, the deaf will hear the word of the scriptures and everyone will begin to speak in their own language about God’s greatness.”

In the city of Thessaloniki there was a man called Leon, an immaculate and righteous person who honored God. He shunned evil and like Job fulfilled all of the divine commandments, living humbly and worshipping God. And like Job, he had seven children. The prophet says about [men like] him: “Blessed is the man who fears God and loves His commandments. His progeny will be powerful on earth. The lineage of the righteous will be blessed. His home will be filled with glory and wealth, and there will be always justice for him.” From such a root shone the two exquisite and excellent offshoots which bore blessed fruit. They were marked with immaculate life since their youth and made wisdom their sister; they adorned their souls and their minds with it. In love and faith they competed with one another, and through wisdom blossomed like sweetly perfumed flowers.

The blessed Constantine was the younger by birth but flew like an eagle on the spiritual wings of reason and virtue. He enlightened his mind with the light radiating from God and became the chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit. He shone brightly with the Spirit and like an endless treasure illuminated everyone with the light of philosophy. Like a source that reached the entire universe he watered those thirsting for the divine Word, in the words of our Lord God Jesus Christ: “As the scripture says, rivers of life-giving water will gush forth from those who believe in me,” that is, the gifts of the life-giving Spirit. Indeed, the Holy Spirit gushed forth abundantly from him, poured out of his mouth and spread sweet spiritual joy all over the universe, sowing the Word among all the people through the means of his wisdom: for he was given the same spiritual gift of speaking languages that was granted to the apostle Paul.

His older brother, the most blessed Methodius, received appointments to high secular offices since his early years. Blossoming with wisdom like a most fragrant flower he was the darling of those in power. In his speeches Methodius was like Solomon, employing heart-felt and marvelous parables, lessons, and thoughts; in his service he was kind to

everyone. And when it came down to warring, he flew as if on wings and appeared suddenly; he was terrifying like Samson, Gideon, and Jesus Navine. That is why he was given the rank of theme commander [*voevoda*] but did not exercise the office for long. Methodius realized that this most turbulent world of ours passes away without benefit, like a shadow. Furthermore, the Word of God wounded him in the heart, as it was said: “Of what use is it to man to acquire the entire world if that would harm or destroy the soul? How can one ransom his soul?” Methodius exchanged the earthly for the heavenly casting out from himself all that is fleeting and striving for the eternal. He went to Olymp and received the monks’ haircut and black habit, expecting to be rewarded with the white and incorruptible angelic vestment.³⁷ He humbly and obediently served everyone and [spent his time] in vigils, prayer, labors, service, strict fasting, constant sobriety, spiritual purity, and weeping, with tears pouring out of his eyes like a river which bathed his entire body. He knew no bodily rest but spent his nights standing up from sunset to sunrise, allowing no sleep to his eyes and no break to his eyelids, instructing himself with psalms, encomia, and spiritual songs. Through his deeds he strove to measure up to the accomplishments of the holy fathers. Indeed, he surpassed some of them in meekness and silence, others in fasting, vigils, and prayer, and was above all in humility. This is how Methodius became famous among all the fathers; he became like the great Arsenius, Anthony and Sabbas, for he re-lived their lives himself. The most merciful God saw that Methodius spent his life with such diligence and influenced the hearts of the monastic brethren who, observing his extraordinary accomplishments in the service of God marveled between themselves and praised God who granted his heavenly grace to those who toil in his name. When the news about his exploits reached even the patriarch Methodius was asked to accept the office of metropolitan of a dignified see but, because they did not succeed in persuading him, appointed him abbot of the monastery called Polychron, where seventy fathers resided. Methodius accepted that charge and lived the incorporeal life there, praying constantly: he became all things to all people to save all.

³⁷ Mount Olymp in northwestern Asia Minor, in the province of Vitinia, was the headquarters of many monastic foundations.

Indeed, the Holy Scriptures praise aloud such persons with these words:

They will seek the most profound wisdom of the ancients and will exercise in prophesy; will keep in their memory stories of prominent men and will delve into the minute details of parables; will serve among notables and will stand before governors; will travel the earth among foreign people; will see good and evil from men; will offer their hearts to the Lord who created them at every sunrise. They will pray to the Almighty; will open their mouths for prayer, and will beg forgiveness for their sins. And if the great God wills it, they will be filled with the spirit of reason. Indeed, God will pour out through them words and wisdom and they will praise God in their prayers for He will enable their preaching and teaching. They will boast with the law of the Lord's covenant. Many will praise their knowledge. It will never perish and will never be lost; their names will live from generation to generation. People will tell stories about their wisdom and the Church will sing out loud their praises.

They were busy workers and unflinching pillars grounded on the sound rock of the faith. They emulated the forefathers and the patriarchs in faith and feats and carried out their attainments and labors. They were like the great Abraham, the forefather of Christ. Because of his faith Abraham became a migrant and a settler in a foreign land but that earned him the name of friend of God. And when he received from God, on account of his faith, the covenant of circumcision, he was called the father of all nations.

These two holy and most glorious fathers and teachers adorned with the same faith accomplished the same feat. Indeed, they migrated from their fatherland and became strangers in a foreign land. They received from God not a law for their tribe as Abraham did, but for a people, which could not tell the right hand from the left, and slaved to and bowed down to whatever they came across as if to God: they worshipped the creature instead of the Creator. These two received not the covenant of circumcision like Abraham but the covenant of baptism and forgiveness of sins. This covenant, accomplished and bequeathed by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself will endure forever.

Furthermore, among the priests of God the two of them were like Moses and Aaron. Moses was God's [nemesi] to Pharaoh. After he subjected Egypt to several kinds of punishment, he led the people of God out of slavery directed during the day by a column of clouds and at night by a pillar of fire. Moses divided the sea and guided them as if on dry ground into the desert; their enemies he drowned in the depths of the sea. In the desert he satisfied their thirst with water striking the

rock and fed them with angelic bread. He prayed up a law from God, written by God's hand on stone tablets, and gave it the people to obey it and abide by it. These two most blessed and God-pleasing men were no less worthy than Moses and Aaron. Watered by the same divine Spirit from on high, honored with double blessing, they led the people out of the darkest sea of the devil, drowned the other Pharaoh, that is, Satan, and completely destroyed his power. Armed with faith and the power of the cross they led the people not into the desert but guided them to the light of knowledge of God. They did not produce water out of a rock like Moses and Aaron, but watered with the faith those thirsting for the divine word. They drew water not from a senseless stone as the other two did but gave to the faithful salvation, eternal food and endless life, through the water and blood that streamed forth from the most pure ribs of our Lord Jesus Christ. They fed [the people] not with the bread of angels but with the very body of our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

Between the two of them they translated double the divine law and gave it to a new people by creating for them new letters. What had been hidden for the wise and prudent in our own times was revealed by these two even to youngsters. The law was inscribed not on stone tablets but on the corporeal tablets of hearts. It was made known neither through clouds nor through fogs and storms but was created and bequeathed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. These two were not servants of the shadow but preachers of the truth. They cleansed the polluted not by sprinkling them with the blood of heifers and he-goats to purify the body but with the holy baptism they not only sanctified the body but lit up candles in everyone's spiritual field. They were priests and preachers not of the sacrificial victim but served as preachers of the bloodless, peaceful, and spiritual liturgy. They were comrades of the apostles for they were chosen for the same work. They voluntarily took the cross on their shoulders and carried it all over the world, spreading their teaching to places which the apostles did not reach, either because they were far way or because there were many other lands closer by where they, having spread out like the rays of the sun, illuminated the entire world with the light of knowledge of God. These two threaded in their steps. They were watered by the same Spirit by God and became preachers and new apostles of the same Word. They did not ground their feat on someone else's accomplishment but invented a new alphabet and adapted it to a new language. The shone in later times, like the Morning Star which, assuming its light from the sun, shines brighter than any

other star. Like the hired workers in the vineyard who endured the work and heat of the day and received the same reward as those who came in the eleventh hour, so the divine grace willed in these later time of ours to reveal for the same feat these two preachers and lights of the entire universe who, having strengthened their cross with faith and deed passed over the world like the sun, illuminating dark places with their steps, dispersing with spiritual fire every pagan and heretical fog without ever sparing either their bodies or their souls, and were always ready to rejoice in drinking Christ's cup of the true faith. They were invincible confronting the Saracens and the Khazars.³⁸ David once vanquished the foreigner by destroying his pride with the three stones that stood for the future image of the Trinity, and was praised by tens of thousands of sons of Israel for cutting off the latter's head with his own sword. Similarly, these two fathers, servants and preachers of the God of the Trinity, appeared at the gatherings of the Saracens and the Jews, used the latter's own books as a spiritual sword to cut off the deceptions of Mohammed and the hatred of the Jews, uprooted them like weeds, and burned them down through the divine grace, planted the Word of God like wheat in the field of hearts, and made people delight in their honey-tongued sermons. They confessed the trice beginning-less God loud and clear; proved beyond doubt that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shine brightly in the same substance; caught their enemies like fish in the net of the Word; baptized up to two hundred prominent people among the Khazars not counting their women and children; and were trice praised by the entire Church.

From there they went to the Western lands, spreading the news of the Word of God among a new people. Translating from the Greek tongue the entire ecclesiastical law they handed it over to them in their own language. The brothers demolished and eradicated the ruse of the three languages, cast it out like weeds among wheat and gave to the Church clean and bright grain. The two teachers shone like the sun in the Western lands of Pannonia and Moravia, drove away the darkness of sin, enlightened the people with writings, and thoroughly instructed their disciples in the ecclesiastical order.

In fulfillment of their service they set off on the road to Rome to bow down before the apostolic throne, carrying along spiritual fruits for

³⁸ For identifications of historical persons and events see the notes to Clement's *Eulogy to Constantine the Philosopher* and the *Long Life* of Clement.

blessing.³⁹ When Pope Hadrian learned about them, he went far out of the city of Rome to meet them and welcomed them like angels of God. He approved lovingly of their teaching and consecrated the blessed Methodius as well as some of their disciples in the priesthood.

It was then that our most holy and most blessed father and teacher Constantine the Philosopher finally came to rest. He had a vision from God foretelling his death. He donned the black habit, announced the day of his passing away, and lived for fifty more days, rejoicing and praising God. He died in the Lord in the year 6377 [869] and joined the fathers, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, and the rest of the saints. They buried him in the church of St Clement where his tomb immediately began dispersing cures: blind men saw the light, sick persons got well, and demons were exorcised. When the Romans saw that, they were even more convinced in his sainthood.

After they consecrated the most honorable and pious Methodius as archbishop of the see of Pannonia, the see of the holy apostle Andronicus, one of the seventy apostles, they sent him into the Slavic lands to teach their peoples, having written this to the princes of these lands, Rostislav, Svetopolk, and Kotsel:

Bishop Hadrian, servant of the servants of God, to Rostislav, Svetopolk, and Kotsel. Glory to God in Heaven, peace on earth, and wellbeing among men. Because we learned from you of the spiritual joys pertaining to your salvation we are sending you our most honorable brother Methodius, who has been consecrated archbishop of your lands, as you requested from us, to teach you by translating the holy books into your language. Let the words of the prophet get fulfilled: "Praise the Lord, all you people, glorify Him you all; let every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is the Lord, for the glory of the Lord, amen!" In the Gospel the Lord says, addressing his disciples: "Go, teach all the people, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and instructing them to observe everything I have commanded; here, I am with you until the end of the world, amen." Beloved children, hearken to the divine doctrine which has been given to you in our time for your salvation, learn prudently so that you offer a worthy fruit [to God] and receive the incorruptible crown in this life and in the next along with all the saints for all ages, amen!

When Methodius arrived in Moravia, all the people went out joyfully to meet him and welcomed him like an angel of God. Blind men's eyes

³⁹ Clement means the ecclesiastical books in the Slavic language and perhaps their disciples as well.

were opened and the ears of the deaf began to hear, and stammering tongues proclaimed clearly the glory of God. Now their children used the same mouths with which they sacrificed victims to Satan at springs and slandered God everywhere to offer to God clean spiritual service on behalf of the entire world. The name of God was praised everywhere in the new language whose new preacher and apostle became Methodius. He rose like the sun, drove away the fog of ignorance, and enlightened every heart with the light of knowledge of God. With his meekness, sweetness, and love he attracted everyone to himself; completed the way, guarded the faith, beautified churches with spiritual songs and litanies, and died in the Lord in the year 6394 [886] of the creation of this world.⁴⁰ He joined his fathers, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and assimilated himself to them, fashioning himself in their image. He was equal to some, below others, and surpassed yet others in spiritual strength, deeds, and feats. Methodius shone like the sun with his enlightening sermons and lessons. When we think of his honey-tongued sermons, we cannot find their equals in spiritual sweetness.

And so, what praises should I offer to you, who labored so much in the eastern, western, and northern countries and who sought not the corruptible and the fleeting but the eternal and the endless?

Courageously shouldering the Lord's cross, you cleared and plowed with it the earth, which has been deserted and overgrown with weeds because of our sins, planted spiritual seeds, and offered to the Church clean grain: teaching as bright as the day through which you, oh saints, shine like lights over the entire world, chasing away demoniac slurs and all kinds of heresy. You became the great pillars of the Church of Christ, you were heavenly men and earthly angels; you achieved incorporeal life while still in the body. Blessed indeed is the womb that bore you and the one who raised you like two stalks heavy with fruit with which you fed the hungry people. You satisfied the thirsty with life-giving drink and gave generously away, as if from an inexhaustible spring, food that fed everyone.

Who indeed can compose a eulogy worthy of you? You made yourselves equal to Heaven and, crisscrossing the entire earth under the sky with your steps you enlightened the world. Blessed are your tongues with which you sowed the spiritual seed of the salvation of a large nation.

⁴⁰ According to the full *Life of Methodius*, the date is April 6, 885; this is the accepted date for Methodius' death.

God granted to the two of you a gift inspired by Him; [with it] you drove the darkness of ignorance away, setting yourself a good example for everyone and pouring spiritual sweetness out of your mouths.

You were destroyers of paganism, enemies of heresy, and exorcists of demons. You were the light of the dim and the teachers of children, spreading out spiritual delight. You are copious food for the hungry, never-drying spring for the thirsty, generous givers of rich vestments to the naked, helpers of the orphans, welcoming hosts to strangers, visitors of the sick, consolers of the bereaved, defenders of those in trouble, assistants of the widows, sources of light for the blind, anchor and great hope for those floating on the waters of this life, bulwark and roof for those who seek refuge with you, opponents of the Jews, confessors of the Holy Trinity, executors of the Divine Providence, servants of the greatness of God, sources of the divine Word, solid pillars of the Church of Christ, seal of the truth, shield of the faith, helmet of salvation, stalks with many grains, and honey-bearing wine. Your sermons are honeycombs with which you delighted the entire universe. You were like most precious pearls; you poured out God's treasury. You were dwellings of the Divine Providence and chosen vessels of the Holy Spirit which carried the name of Christ all over the earth. You two took the cross on yourselves, held everything fleeting in contempt, and received the delight of eternal goodness.

Most holy and true shepherds: pray incessantly and diligently for your chosen spiritual flock, drive away our sufferings, and delivering us from trouble and harm! Illuminate our hearts' eyes and strengthen our minds so that we are worthy to follow in your steps! Take on yourselves our weaknesses and gave us strength from on high so that as we live honorable lives in Christ we become true heirs of your labors and preachers of the true faith, which you bequeathed to us; and we all, in one voice, praise the trice Holy God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, for ever, and for all ages. Amen!

First Life of Naum of Ohrid, tenth century (by Constantine of Preslav?).

The *Life* briefly outlines the activities of another of the first-generation teachers of the Slavic letters and disciples of the Slavic apostles Cyril and Methodius, Naum, in the Bulgarian southwest. It has been attributed to either a disciple of Naum and Clement, or one of their fellow-disciples of Cyril and Methodius, presumably Constantine of Preslav, and was composed before 969, the date of Naum's canonization, to establish his saintly dossier. No trace of the tenth-century original is preserved. The *Life* is extant in a fifteenth-century copy. Edition: *BSM*, 306–7.

Month of December, twenty-third day. Memory of our father Naum.

Brothers, let us not forget Presbyter Naum, the brother, comrade, and fellow-sufferer of the blessed Clement, with whom he suffered much harm and pain from the heretics.⁴¹

When Clement was appointed bishop, the same pious Tsar Simeon sent his comrade Naum to teach in his stead.⁴² And he, persisting in God-pleasing endeavors, remained a virgin from his youth to the end. He built a monastery, the church of the Holy Archangels, by the source of the White Lake and taught for seven years.⁴³ Then he left the teaching and retired in the cloister where he spent ten [more] years, and before his death donned the monastic image. He passed away peacefully in the Lord on December 23. Let this be known as well: Presbyter Naum died six years before Bishop Clement.⁴⁴

Let this be known too, to all who read this, as we wrote earlier, that the heretics tormented many and others, presbyters and deacons, sold for money to the Jews. The Jews took them and led them to Venice. As they put them up for sale, on God's orders a man from the emperor arrived from Constantinople on imperial business. Hearing about them, the emperor's man ransomed them, took them with him to Constantinople and told Emperor Basil about them.⁴⁵ And they were restored to the ranks they have had before, such as presbyters and deacons, and were given offices. No one died in slavery. Some, patronized by the emperors, died in Constantinople, others came to the Bulgarian land with great honor, and found rest here.

The Moravian land, according to the prophesy of the holy archbishop Methodius, was promptly punished by God for their lawlessness and heresy, for the banishment of the orthodox fathers, and for the torments inflicted on the latter by the heretics with whom they acquiesced. In a few years the Magyars came, a people from Peonia, sacked their land and devastated it. But they⁴⁶ were not captured by the Magyars

⁴¹ Naum was Clement's spiritual brother, not a natural kin. The phrase suggests that the author had composed a *Life* of Clement as well.

⁴² In 893.

⁴³ The "White Lake" is the Lake Ohrid.

⁴⁴ Naum died in 910, Clement died in 916.

⁴⁵ Emperor Basil I (867–886), died on August 29, 886.

⁴⁶ The disciples.

for they fled to the Bulgarians. However, the land remained desolate under the rule of the Magyars.

And I, brothers, the poor wretch, was greatly grieved for when I tried to find the full *Lives* of our blessed fathers, written by those who knew them and recorded them in detail and to the end, I was not able to discover them. Because I did not know much, no more than what the blessed fathers themselves told me, I desired to write, but I was anxious, and wished to find more in writing. Thus, if any one finds something written by others pray not chastise us, the poor and simple ones, for it should be known that the fathers accomplished much more than that and revealed many signs. Humble as they were, however, they only told us this much and the rest withheld.

I did this on my own, but the metropolitan Marco who was bishop of Devol, the fourth bishop in the Slavonic tongue in the diocese of Devol, encouraged me as well, for he was a disciple of the blessed Clement himself. Because it is through the prayers of these blessed fathers that we hope to receive mercy, and grace, and absolution of our sins from the merciful Lord of ours, who said: “Whoever receives the prophet in the name of prophesy shall receive the prophet’s reward; whoever accepts the pious in the name of piety shall receive the reward of the pious.”⁴⁷ The divine apostle Paul said the same: “Remember our masters, who preached to you the word of God, keep before your eyes the end of their lives, and emulate their faith.”⁴⁸

For this reason, brothers, let us emulate the good lives of these blessed fathers, who kept their virginity and purity, suffered much harm and tribulations for the true faith in God, so that we can receive together with them eternal grace from our Lord Jesus Christ with whom the glory of the Father and the Holy Spirit is now, forever, and for all ages. Amen.

Services for Tsar Peter (927–969), late tenth century (excerpts).

Although no *Life* of the pious ruler is extant, there is no doubt that he was unofficially canonized soon after his death. References for his sainthood date from the eleventh century; the earliest one is in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals*. His memory is celebrated on January 30, the feast day of St Clement. If the

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⁴⁷ Matthew 10: 40–41.

⁴⁸ Hebrews 13:7.

wording of the two services is to be taken literally, they must have been composed on the eve of the Russian and Byzantine invasions and the occupation of northeastern Bulgaria. It is likely that the services were written for celebrations at the tomb of the ruler or in the monastery where he took on the monastic habit before his death. Edition with commentary: *BSM*, 383–94.

First Service: Month of January, 30th Day.

Translatio of the relics of St Clement, Archbishop of Rome and memory of our holy father and monk Peter, former tsar of the Bulgarians. To Peter:

As well as...protector from our visible enemies and foes, most blessed Peter, pray to God for us. Behold the remnants of your people now, as you...in our minds to your tomb, most honorable Tsar Peter, I beg you to clear my mind so that we can praise you.

When you...enlightened my soul by instructing it in the [matter] of God's coming and now for the elevation of the chest with Clement's relics.

Lord Christ, accept now the faith of Your pious flock, which steps forward meekly and diligently appears before the casket....

To Tsar Peter.

Just as earlier you wished to live your life in peace, now with your prayers to God on our behalf bring peace to all lands.

Hurry up with your prayers, most blessed father Peter, for you see that a great trouble is engulfing us and we are overwhelmed.

You appeared to us like the morning star, shining from the earth in recent years and dispersed all of the darkness of the opposing enemy.

The sinful lips who attempt to praise you are not able of doing that, Tsar Peter, because of the beauty of your goodness. That is why we beg you: grant us words to praise [you].

The first generation flourishes, as the prophet foretold it: glory and wealth in the house and His justice forever. That came to pass for you, Tsar Peter.

In faith you [reign] over a double tsardom, blessed father Tsar Peter: you reign here and there....

The ruler who announced you, the youngest among the younger brothers, anointed you as David was once and entrusted you with this land to guard it against trouble.

To the supreme among your namesakes [i.e., Apostle Peter] you dedicated this church and founded it on the rock, preserving it from the storms of the enemy.

...

Tsar Peter, the estate of the blessed ones is celebrating today and rejoicing with you forever in the [heavenly] foundations. Be our [intercessor] here and there so that we succeed.

Earlier you were with us, father, and welcomed us kindly like children of yours: now accept these prayers of ours and protect us from any kind of trouble.

...

How can we praise your honorable head, holy Tsar Peter, when we cannot clear our mind, when we see the good order of your customs according to which you never ceased to serve God.

Our honorable father and blessed Tsar Peter, do not forsake the vestiges of your time, now engulfed by great waves and storms: deliver us from the visible and invisible foes who oppose us.

...

Do not despise those who celebrate your memory today, but through your prayers to the Lord pray up abundant life and deliverance from all evil on earth for us and eternal life in Heaven. Most honorable father Peter, do not forsake those who pray to you.

Second service. To St Clement and St Peter, former Bulgarian tsar.

Emulator of the supreme [Apostle Peter], of blessed one, [you] have the apostle's warmth, faith, and love of God. You lay in God's temple but you keep busy every hour communing and delivering your clergy and giving generously away in the hands of the holy ones.

Step forward, oh you faithful, to praise the monk Peter, the former tsar of Bulgaria from Christ. Rejoice, solid rock of Christ's faith. Rejoice, Peter, strength of the churches in your city of Preslav. Rejoice, zealot of Archstrategos Michael's good deeds. With fast and prayer you cleansed your soul and through hunger and thirst you thinned your body. Accept us now as you did [many] strangers, anoint us with your chrism, and pour over us your mercy so that, cleansed from our sins, we praise you with honor.

...

You were the spring and the generous treasury from which [alms] to the poor always poured out; your alms never ended. You loved monks and servants of the church of God because of their prayers and hoped for reward from God; you were not disappointed and showed to be a good fruit.

...

Do not despise those who celebrate [your] memory today. [Offer] prayers to the Lord to grant them abundant life, deliver them from

every kind of evil, and reward them with eternal life. Father Peter, as you stand before the Lord in Heaven do not despise the one who offers you this praise.

...

Now, oh community of the faithful gathered today in the honorable house of the most holy father, let us sing with clear voices the praises of the one who praised our God Christ, and praise him with joy and exultation, saying: Rejoice, oh man of heaven and earthly angel! And further: Rejoice, oh holy royal head whom we do not cease to call on. Rejoice, oh eager helper and intercessor, healer of the souls and bodies of your people! Deliver us from vices and adverse misfortunes and sudden death! Father Peter, pray to the Lord God [for us]!

Monasticism

91 *Testament of St John of Rila.*

The rule that John of Rila composed for the disciples of his foundation shortly before his retirement to a few final years of solitude before his death, his *Testament*, is one of the earliest preserved in the Orthodox monastic tradition. It is the only extant document of this kind from medieval Bulgaria. It offers only general guidelines for coenobitic life and eschews particularities. In this, it resembles the *Rule* of the Studite monastery in Constantinople (before 826) and the *Rule* of Athanasius the Athonite, the founder of the Great Lavra in Mount Athos. The *Testament* is preserved only in two nineteenth-century copies, based on a copy made in 1385, but its style, composition, phraseology, parallels with contemporary Byzantine documents, and linguistic details appear to support its authenticity. The document records the co-existence of coenobitic and heremitic life as complementary and progressively rigorous monastic practices, a model embraced by John himself and subsequently used by most of the Bulgarian saintly figures. John insisted on complete self-sufficiency and independence of the foundation, but it appears that after his death substantial properties accrued to it. By the early thirteenth century the foundation had grown considerably, supported by the ruling dynasty and pious donations by Bulgarians of all walks of life. It was renovated and much enlarged in the 1330s, when a new compound was constructed and richly endowed by the *protosevast* and *Caesar* Hreljo, a semi-independent ruler in the region. The last recorded royal donation was a modest gift of revenues and conformation of privileges and exemptions granted by the last ruler of Tarnov, Tsar Ioan Shishman (1371–1395) in 1378, shortly before the province of Sofia was lost to the Ottomans. After 1385 the foundation suffered various vicissitudes under Ottoman rule. A substantial boost of its fortunes was the return, in 1469, of St John's relics. Edition: Jordan Ivanov, *Sveti Ivan Rilski i negovijat manastir* (Sofia, 1917), 131, 136–42. Existing translation: Ilija Iliev, "Rila: Testament

of John of Rila,” in John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero, eds., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 2000), 125–34, (with some omissions).

This testament of our holy father John of Rila, desert-dweller and miracle-worker, which he bequeathed to his disciples before his death, was copied from a parchment with great diligence by Lord Dometian, most honorable and reverend among the priests, a man full with erudition and all kinds of spiritual and rational wisdom, who was himself a disciple of the venerable hermit Barlaam, who spent nine years on the mountain of Cherna, now also known as Churna, and another twenty-eight years at the old hermitage. After his tutor died, he [Dometian] became abbot and tutor of the great communal *Lavra* of Rila. [The testament] was copied so that it might be read more easily and for [Dometian’s] remembrance by all the monks in this foundation, since the parchment on which the testament was originally written down was carefully hidden together with other books and objects belonging to of the monastery on account of the great fear which was reigning in that time from the impious children of Hagar. In the year of the creation of the world 6893, from the birth of Christ 1385, on the twelfth day of the month of February, on the day of St Melethios of Antioch. I, Savatij, humble monk and ecclesiarch, and forever disciple of the most honorable abbot and tutor Dometian, made the present copy from it.

I, the humble and sinful John who has not done anything worthy on this earth, came to this deserted place of Rila and found no man living here but only wild beasts and impenetrable forests. I settled here all by myself among the wild beasts having neither food nor shelter. The sky was my shelter, the earth was my bed, and the herbs were my food. However, the good God, for the love of whom I gave up everything and suffered hunger, and thirst, and bodily nakedness as well as cold and the heat of the sun, did not forsake me in the end, but like the good-bearing and child-loving Father he is, satisfied all of my needs abundantly. How can I repay the Lord for all that He has lavished on me? Many are his benefactions. He looked down from His holy heights at my humility and gave His support to me so that I can go through everything; not I, but the power of Christ that is in me. For every good breath and every perfect gift is from Him.

Looking at all of you today, gathered here in the Lord, here, as I told you, where no man has dwelled before but only wild beasts, and

also understanding that the end of my life here draws near, I decided, before I depart from this life, to leave you this fatherly testament of mine in the same way that natural fathers leave their children earthly inheritance of silver, gold, and other property so that, when you commemorate your father in the Holy Spirit, you remember his testament as well.

I know you, my beloved children in the Lord, and I now very well too that you, mere beginners, are not yet confirmed in the monastic life; but fear not, for the Lord's power is made perfect in weakness. This is, actually, why I decided to write down for you this rough and ignorant testament of mine, so that you keep it always in your minds and thus become stronger in the Lord in body and soul and master the virtues in fear of God. Because I do believe in my God, whom I have served since my youth and for whom I labored much, and after my departure this deserted place, which was until now uninhabited and terrifying, will be populated by a multitude of citizens of the desert and for it will be fulfilled what has been written: "The barren hath many more children than she which hath a husband."

Because of this I beg you, my children, whom I have gathered here in the Lord, I beg you, my flesh and blood, do not neglect your father's instruction. Together with the apostle I say: "[My little children of whom] I travail [in birth] again until Christ is formed in you." I beg you and I swear you in the terrifying name of God not to violate or abandon anything after my death. Carry out everything as I have written it and as you have promised before God. If someone disregards or violates any part of it, let him be damned and separated from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and have no communion with the saints who pleased God centuries ago, but let his lot be with those who crucified the Lord of Glory and with his betrayer Judas and [let his name] be erased from the Book of Life and not be inscribed in it alongside [those of] the righteous.

Above all, I bequeath to you the obligation to preserve the holy faith immaculate and pure from false teaching, just as we received it from the holy fathers, and not add to it diverse and strange doctrines. Hold fast and keep up the traditions you have heard and seen from me. Do not stray either to the right or to the left but walk along the tsar's road. Steer clear diligently from worldly fascinations and always remember why you have abandoned the world and why you have despised it together with all that is in the world.

Most of all, beware the avaricious snake “for the love of money is the root of all evil” according to the apostle who calls [greed] second idolatry. The wealth of the hermit is not in silver and but in perfect poverty, denial of the will, and great humility. It is not I who command that; I am reminding you of the commandments of Christ. For He told his holy disciples and through them everyone who has renounced the world: “Provide neither gold, nor silver, [nor brass in your purses] nor a bag, nor copper in your belts,” etc. Because gold and silver are great enemies of the monk and bite those who have them like a snake. However, if we have unflinching faith in God, he will not leave us deprived of anything, for He Himself says: “A woman might forget her children but I will not forget you,” and again: “But seek first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you.” For in the beginning, when I first came to this deserted place, the sly enemy tried to tempt me through avarice, and the pious tsar sent me a lot of gold. For the sake of God I refused to see him, for I understood that it was a perfidy of the devil. I did not take it but returned it to the one who had sent it, for I thought to myself: “If I wished to have gold and silver and things like that why did I come to this terrifying and impenetrable deserted place where I found no man but only wild beasts?” This is how I saved myself from the temptations of the cunning seducer, who is always scheming to tempt us with the things that we have renounced willfully. Similarly, you should not be after any such things for your heavenly Father knows all that you need before you ask [for it].

Do not seek to be recognized and beloved by earthly tsars and princes nor do put your hope in them forsaking the heavenly Tsar with whom you signed up to be [His] soldiers and “wrestle not against flesh and blood...but against the ruler of the darkness of this world.” For the prophet Jeremiah also admonishes us, speaking this: “Cursed be the man that hoped in man” and so forth. Listing all the evils, he adds that “blessed is the man that hoped in the Lord.” Do not say: “What shall we eat, or drink, or in what shall we be dressed?” for the Gentiles seek after these things. “Behold the birds of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather in barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?” As soon as you abandon the world do not look back neither with your body nor with your mind for it is said: “No man who has put his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God.” The apostle

too, teaches us to “forget those things which are behind and straining towards what lies ahead.” What does it mean, my children, “to forget those things which are behind?” Nothing else but to consign to deep oblivion all those things which, when we abandon the world we leave behind and despise for God’s sake, and to strive towards the glorious deed which lays before us, to which we are called by the one who stirs us for great deeds, our most gracious God and Lord Jesus Christ, who has enabled us to endure his gentle yoke, “for his yoke is easy to wear, his load is light.”

And because the grace of the Holy Spirit has brought you together, you must endeavor to live with one heart, one mind, and one spirit, and thus in unity have before your eyes only the eternal reward which God has prepared for those who have loved Him. The communal life is more useful for monks than the solitary for not many can deal with solitude but only the few who have been perfected in the monastic life. The common life, however, suits everyone, as the patristic books testify to and teach us sufficiently. The prophet Daniel, inspired by the [Holy] Spirit, glorified it, saying: “How good and how pleasant it is to live together as brothers in unity!” In addition, an ecclesiastical hymn inspired by the Spirit puts it this way: “Because in this the Lord promised eternal life.” Also, did not our good Lord and Master Jesus Christ speak about this Himself, with his immaculate lips: “For where two of three meet together in my name, I am there among them.” Our God-bearing fathers say about the solitary life: “Woe to him that is alone when he falls; for there is no one to lift him up.” This is why, my children, as the Holy Spirit through the mouth of the prophet glorifies communal life, you do not neglect it either but, on the contrary, confirm it and be like one body in the Lord which has different members. Some of them form the head which governs, others the feet which toil and support, so that from all a single spiritual body in the Lord is shaped, guided and directed by a single rational and speech-endowed soul, that is, by spiritual wisdom, and not divided in anything. When such a dwelling and life in God is arranged, then He Himself will be among you, governing you invisibly.

Do not seek preeminence and authority and remember the One who said: “If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.” Choose mentors for yourself and appoint superiors who will be showed to you by God, that is, men with reputation in spiritual deeds, who surpass everyone in intelligence and spiritual inquiries and who are capable of shepherding well and in a manner pleasing God

the flock entrusted to them on the meadows of piety, and instructing it comfortably in the life-giving commands of Christ. [In appointing] such men it is more proper to seek God's approval rather than men's opinion. However, as our great father and teacher in monasticism, Ephraem Syrin said, if all of you begin to crave authority and preeminence, all of you want to be abbots, all preceptors, and masters, and teachers, and rivalries spring up among you, as well as quarrels, disputes, jealousy, calumnies, arrogance, envy, and other passions unbecoming to monks, then you must surely know that Christ is not among you. Christ is not the teacher of discord and dissent but of peace and unity. He prayed to God the Father for his holy disciples to be united, that is, of one mind, they themselves and everyone who believes in Him through them. This is what he said: "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name that they may be one as we are one." And in another place: "It is not for these alone that I pray, but for those also who through their words put their faith in me. May they all be as one." So you too, be united and at peace with one another. For He said to his disciples: "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace." As for the peace of Christ, children, He Himself explains it, saying: "I am giving you what the world cannot give you." The peace of Christ surpasses anything one can think of. It is the peace about which the prophet said: "And His peace has no bounds." It is also what the apostle teaches us, saying: "Aim at peace with everyone and holy life, for without that no one will see God." Have such a peace now among you and prepare everything in God with great unity of mind and in agreement so that you do not provoke the wrath of our merciful Lord God.

And if anyone among you is found to sow weeds, that is, discord and similar temptations, you must immediately cast such a man out of your community so that this does not grow into a devouring canker, as the apostle said, and does not spread like evil among good, lest any "bitter, noxious weed growing up contaminates the rest" and the wicked wolf does not menace the peaceful flock of Christ; because there will be such men. Christ prophesied about them, saying: "It is necessary that temptations come but woe to the world for temptations to sin!" Therefore, my children, steer clear of such [men] and do not allow them to settle among you but cast them away from yourselves as the shepherd chases away the scruffy sheep from the pure flock.

As you live together for the Lord's sake and bear the burdens of one another, do not neglect those who live in solitude and are "refugees in deserts and on the mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground

and the world is not worthy of them,” but provide for them as much as you can so that they will be intercessors on your behalf before God, for the prayers of the righteous can achieve much.

Instruct yourselves in the Lord’s law day and night. Read often the books of the Fathers and strive to emulate our holy fathers Anthony, Theodosius, and the others who shone like lights in the world with their good works. Hold firmly to the ecclesiastical rule and do not disregard or neglect anything of what the holy Fathers established.

Do not neglect manual labor but work with your hands. Let the prayer “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner” be always on your lips and remembrance of death on your mind. Such was the way of the ancient fathers in the desert. They did not eat their bread in vain. Not only did they support themselves with the labor of their hands, but gave to the needy as well. Thus, they were not disappointed in their hope for, as the apostle Paul says, “It is good that we should gain inner strength from the grace of God and not from rules about food, which have never benefited those who observed them.”

He says too: “Never cease to love your fellow-Christians. Do not neglect to show hospitality; by doing this, some have entertained angels unawares.”

Confirm the newly enlightened people who share the same blood with you in the faith and teach them to abandon the ugly pagan rites and the evil customs which they practice even after the acceptance of the holy faith. They do this because of ignorance, and need to be brought to their senses.

My beloved children in the Lord, I had much more to say unto you, but it is impossible to write everything down. I deliver you to Him who is the source of all reason and wisdom and the true Comforter, to the Holy and life-giving Spirit so that He Himself grants you wisdom, brings you to your senses, enlightens you, teaches you, and instructs you in every good deed.

Now I leave you to our beloved brother Gregory, who will be instructor and superior in my place; about him all of you have testified that he is able to govern you well and according to God and elected him in full agreement as superior even though he did not want it, but on account of his obedience and humility he acquiesced to your request. God will show you [whom to choose] after him.

As for myself, I wish to live from now on in peace and silence, repent of my sins, and beg mercy from God. Remember me, your sinful father, always in your prayers so that I may be granted mercy on Judgment

Day because I have done nothing good on earth and I fear the judgment and the torments in store for sinners like me. God's blessing be with all of you to guard and protect you from all evils. Amen.

I have written this in the year from the creation of the world 6449 [941], on the twenty-fifth day of the month of March.

I, the humble and most sinful John, the first inhabitant of the deserted place of Rila, sign with my own hand and confirm what is written above.

Postscript to the Old Bulgarian translation of the Life of St Anthony the Great, ninth-tenth centuries. 92

As Christianity took roots in the country, the appeal of monastic life spread among great and small alike. Translation of patristic writings quickly emerged to provide them with the necessary instruction. The following excerpt illustrates that effort. The author refers to a Bulgarian archbishop and a presbyter with the same name Ioan; either one might be the one to whom Kosmas Presbyter refers in his exhortation of bishops and priests. Edition: Angelov, *Iz starata literatura*, 2, 112–13.

From Ioan, the unworthy presbyter who translated this.

I, the sinful one, as I complete the translation of the work of Athanasius the Great on the life of our great Father Anthony, would like to converse for a moment with those of our monks willing to listen, and with in general with the lay [Christians]. I beg your forgiveness in case we rendered a word incorrectly or inappropriately in the translation of his miracles. We are not that skillful in the rendition of the Hellenic words that cannot be found in our language, but tried to capture their meaning. We did not rely not solely on our mind, but were supported by the denizen of the desert John, who followed the life of Anthony, on the request of our lord Ioan, manager of the Bulgarian church, Archbishop of the Bulgarian land. We were asked to translate not only the *Life of Anthony*, but that of the blessed miracle-maker and disciple of Peter Pancratius as well for it has not yet been translated by any one. I thought it over, and I decided to go ahead despite our uncouthness so that the Slavic people are not deprived from the divine *Lives* of those miracle-makers. I recon that the obedient will not be denied the reward of our Lord God, the Savior Christ for [their] spiritual travails when He comes to present the pure souls of his people before God. His is the glory, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now, and for all ages, and forever.

*Popular culture and vestiges of paganism*93 Tale of the Tree of the Cross, *tenth century*.

The *Tale* is a compilation of Byzantine Greek apocrypha composed by the priest Jeremiah in the tenth century. It is the only one explicitly mentioned in later indexes of forbidden books, such as the Russian *Pogodin's List*, as an original Bulgarian work. Editions: Vatroslav Jagic, *Starine, izdaje jugoslovenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti*, vol. 5, (Zagreb, 1873), 83–95 (a thirteenth-century Bulgarian version); Andrej Popov, *Pervoe pribavlenie k opisaniju i katalogu knjig tserkovnoj pečati biblioteki Hludova* (Moscow, 1875), 31–44 (a fourteenth-century Russian version identifying the author).

Moses led the sons of Israel out of Red Sea and brought them to Mera. There was abundant water in Mera, but they could not drink from it for it was bitter. Moses called on God and prayed to him for the people. An angel came to him and showed him three trees: fir, cedar, and cypress. Moses did what the angel ordered him. He took the three trees, wove them together, and planted them at the water source. The angel of God said: “This is the image of the Holy Trinity. That three will be salvation; that tree if life for the world; and on that tree the Jews will crucify the Lord and the true light will spread from the lamp that lives in the world. The Jewish high priests will try the One who will come to try the whole world, live and dead alike.” These were the words with which Moses foretold [the coming of] Christ, as the angel taught him. The water immediately became sweet for the delight and joy of people and animals, the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. The sons of Israel heard what Moses said about that tree, how [Christ] will come and how they will try Him. Moses spoke many prophetic words, which came to pass.

Many years later Moses came with his people to the land of Khorif. The place was good to pitch their tents. It was called Moawia and was deserted for it could not be crossed because it swarmed with very evil snakes. Moses' people were bitten and many died in the tents. Moses grieved for his people and called out loud to his Lord God. The Lord heard him and sent an angel who held the sign of the cross in his hand: a copper snake pierced in the middle by a spear. The angel told Moses: “Make yourself what you see in my hand. This is what will happen to the tree that you planted by the water for someone will be hung on it,” and left him.

Moses got up early, hammered copper in the shape of a snake, pierced it in the middle with a spear, stuck it among his people, and told those

who had been bitten: “If some among you get sick and I am away, look at the sign I placed and cry out loud ‘My God, in the name of this sign, have mercy on me!’” And those who had been bitten began to get well although they did not know that this was the sign of the cross. They bowed to the spear and the copper and worshipped the Almighty who was to come for the salvation of the entire world. After that Moses said to the people: “You can all see that you are saved just by gazing [at the sign]; this is how it will be. After all these years the Almighty Creator of the first humans Adam and Eve will come and they will receive eternal life. He will come [to justify] the patriarchs, the prophets, and all those who shed their blood for Christ and ended their lives in His name.” One of the Israelites said to him: “Tell us about everything that will happen.” And he told them everything that the angel had told him: how the tree that he planted at the waters of Mera will be forged into the cross of that One who will be born of the lineage of Judas; how He will be born of the lineage of the Virgin Mary and will be of the lineage of David, the grandson of Abraham; how the most pure Virgin will be born of the righteous Jesse and how of the Virgin the Son of the Almighty will be born and will be hung on the cross between two robbers. The house of this one will be built in forty-six years. Then they will cut down the tree of salvation; but in that time the Almighty will not deign to come down to earth and get born here. They will cut down the tree after four thousand years or more.

That is what Moses told the sons of Israel. They listened attentively and remembered it all in their hearts, saying; “When will that happen?” and looked up to Heaven, begging for mercy. Then all of them, a multitude of people, came to the tree and guarded it from foreigners. They often heard tell how He would be crucified between two robbers.

In that time there was a robber by the name of Aphrosit. He came to them and said: “How can I get deliverance from my many sins?” Moses’ fellows told him: “Go to Mera and guard the tree from foreigner until the royal decree comes from Jerusalem to cut it down. Go in the desert with them and if you happen to see everything, get yourself crucified next to the One who will judge the whole world.” Aphrosit went to Mera to guard the tree and spent there seventy-five years. He ended his life after his body dried up from fasts and vigils and went to the Lord. In the same manner sixty-seven people guarded the tree in turn, inspired by the Spirit. The prophets kept coming and foretelling what

was to happen. [The people] believed and worshipped the tree, saying that salvation was in Moses' prophecy. And so the years went by.

Many years after the death of Moses and the other prophets who are listed in the Book of Genesis the first tsardom on earth came about, that of the son of Alkan; the one who renewed the crown took for his son-in-law David. The Holy Spirit entered into David and he uttered a prophecy, saying: "The Lord will come from Heaven and He will not be late; His glory will be great and His tsardom will have no end." Further, he said: "Mercy and Truth met, Justice and Peace kissed; Truth shone from earth and Justice descended from Heaven." Because Truth is Elizabeth, of whom John the Baptist was born; and Righteousness and Peace is the holy Mother of God, of whom Christ our God was born." This David had many sons because he was promiscuous [*saret-nistenin*]*—*a sin, besides what was permitted by the prophets, as the prophet said: "Many virgins will be brought to the tsar." Let us recall Uriah in the Book of Kings, how he was killed because of a woman by Tsar David, whom the prophet Nathaniel exposed by the command of the angel. This David reigned for forty-two years; Solomon was born of him and Virsavia and on him the spirit of grace alighted. In the time of that same Tsar David there was a man called Esrom. He came to him and told him about all of his evil deeds, robberies, thefts, and offenses. David's councilors told him: "He has heard that there is a tree planted in Mera. It is called 'salvation.' This is the tree of forgiveness, the tree that affirms life. You can go there, even though you call yourself usurer; it will be good for you to go. If you see the tree you will be saved." The elders told him nothing about the cross so that he does not get scared and reverts to his evil deeds. When he heard what they said about the tree and the absolution from his sins, he ran to it with joy. When he arrived, the people who lived there asked him: "Why did you come here, why such a long journey?" He told them that the reason for his coming was that he had been sent by the tsar. Those who dwelled there, hearing this, told him about the tree, what would happen and how God will be crucified between two robbers. He rejoiced, because he hoped for that to happen soon. He expected to be the one to carry the tree. He prayed and said: "Will God really will to descend to earth?" He prayed and worshipped the tree every hour of the day and night. This Esrom spent seventy years at the tree of salvation but the grace of God was in no hurry. He cried out loud and said this: "This tree is the salvation of the whole world. This tree is everyone's hope. This tree is the deliverance of those who

believe in it. This three is adornment. This tree is the succor of every righteous soul.”

When Tsar David became thirty years old [or: reigned for thirty years] he went through a great terror. He fell gravely sick and an angel snatched his soul. He showed him the image of a church in Heaven and uttered those words: “This is how the House of God in Jerusalem should look like.” Then the angel went back up to Heaven. Tsar David began to sing: “How lovely are the dwellings of Your Powers, my Lord; My soul desires to rest in the palace of the Lord,” and so forth as per the psalm. He deliberated upon what he had seen and realized in what beauty he had been ordered to build the House of God. Presently he called Solomon and told him what he had seen and heard. Solomon exclaimed: “How can I prepare a house for God? He is uncreated and resides in Heaven!” And he declined to do it, saying: “I cannot build such a beauty!” David said: “Solomon, listen and do not argue with your father. I will build the church whose image I saw; as for you, work and do not open your mouth to criticize me. Because I realized that you will tempt God with your mind and the skill of your hands.” David ordered his youths to bring one hundred candles for everyone. When his order was fulfilled and David got all candles, he made a small church, showed it to Solomon and said: “Look at its walls, its columns, its beams, its top, its foundations, its domes, and its embellishments.” Solomon was terrified and cried out to God in great grief, saying: “Oh Lord, Master of all creatures! Will You come and live in a created home? I am just a servant of Yours; how can I adorn Your home?” Solomon spoke that and bowed down to his father. Then he took the model of the church with him. Solomon’s mind was then in Heaven, expecting help and consolation; they were granted to him. David lived to see old age even though he suffered much in his early years. He revealed all that to his son Solomon and ended his life on his seventy-third year.

Solomon became tsar after him and kept the model of the church, expecting the coming of the angel. And lo and behold, the angel stood before him, showed him a sign and put it on his right hand. A terrible writing was on it. Then the angel disappeared. Only Solomon knew what the angel taught him and what was written on that ring. Solomon began to build the House of God. He gathered an uncountable multitude to work on it: some hewed stone, others worked on the columns; some burned rocks [for mortar] and made bricks, others [took care of] planks and sand. To put it briefly, all of his tsardom gathered here and

kept busy. When they heard that the House of God was being built, everyone eagerly rushed to help, saying “Perhaps God will come and live with us!”

Solomon kept building for eight years when certain men, seized by envy, came to him and pointed out to him the tree of salvation. They came from the land of Mera and could not stand to look at the glory of the tree of salvation and what happened at it. For the tsar’s writ did not run there, robbers got delivered and very sick people got well again: such was the tree’s glory. Tsar Solomon figured that the tree was beautifully curved and would be good for the church and desired to go and see the tree of Mera. When he saw its beauty, he ordered it cut down. The prophet Esrom heard that a royal decree had been issued to cut down the tree and called out bitterly through tears: “Oh Tsar Solomon, do not cut down the tree of salvation; leave alone the tree of protection, do not touch the tree of life, step back from the light of the world because it will enlighten the universe! What do you think you are doing, Solomon? Do not cut down the tree of Judgment! The righteous Jesse has not been born yet, of whom by a virgin mother the third grandson of Adam will be born. Why do you cut down the tree of Judgment? Desist, Solomon, the virgin has not been born yet, why are you cutting down the tree of Judgment?” When Solomon heard that he marveled at his words and thought in himself what all those words might mean. He ordered his servants to cut down the tree and said that it would look good in Jerusalem. When they set off, he told them: “Do not lay it on the ground; encase it in iron circles.” He recalled the words of Esrom and, thinking about them, said: “What would that mean: “Do not cut down the tree of Judgment?”

Then they called blacksmiths and skillful men to encase the tree of salvation. All kinds of craftsmen could be seen at work: some smelted ore, others dug out clay from the earth; some sifted through sand, others carved, and yet others hammered down. The blacksmiths were hard put to do their job, for the place was very inconvenient. They could neither raise the tree nor carry it in their hands, but had to drag it, tied up by their foreheads. All kinds of expertise could be seen there, many hands applied their skill. Thus, after much toil, in seven years they barely succeeded in transporting it for the time of the Judgment had not come yet. When they finally brought it in and attempted to erect it so that the people in the church who came to worship, including the foreigners, see it and marvel at it because its curves were very beautiful, a true miracle occurred. The craftsmen measured its height

before erecting it. However, when they lifted it up, it came up short. They checked it twice and thrice; still, it did not fit. Then they gave up on it and put another tree in its place. What was most strange was that it was left laying down for people to sit on it. Many years it lay outside the church, two hundred and eighteen years altogether. Esrom came to Jerusalem, to the tree of salvation and after he guarded it for four years yielded up his soul to God. He told the people how on that tree the Jews would judge Christ. That is how they ended their lives in the House of God.

Solomon completed the church of God in forty-three years and said: “Will God walk here on His feet?” Then he said: “Lord, do not raise Thee right hand in wrath if I asked Thee: Lord, will you ever come down on earth or I labored for no reason?” Then Solomon took wood, iron, copper, silver, and gold and had two griffins made, looking like a seraph and cherub, placed them in front of himself and said: “Oh God, professed by prophets and apostles if You really desire to come down on earth make these birds come alive to be my consolation, my confirmation that You will come on earth!” Immediately a spirit descended, the eagles flapped their wings and covered themselves. Then Solomon praised God and encouraged his people with these words: “Verily God will come on earth!”

Solomon reigned for seventy-two years and died. Sinarion inherited the tsardom. He gathered all the prophets and wanted to burn them down. Then, without warning, the Haldeian army came and conquered his land, dispersed his soldiers, and killed him, because he had said: “Exterminate all those who believe in the coming of Christ!” Tsar Sinarion reigned for three years. Havdan inherited from him and reigned for thirty years. From him to Herod, when the secret burst in the open for the entire world to see it, twenty four tsars reigned before the light came to the people.

In the land of Jericho there was a man by the name of Isaon. He came to Jerusalem with his wife Nara to pray in the House of God. She was pregnant and gave birth to a son whom they called Spatnik. His parents then settled in Jerusalem, close to the House of God where Solomon had built a place for those coming from afar. They were also near the place from where they could, each in their turn, guard the tree day and night. That place is called *Razboiste* till this day and for that reason everyone who got there, a good man or an evil one, was called a “robber.” This Isaon spent some time at that place and told his son Spatnik: “My child, guard the tree that lies here because

on that tree Christ will be crucified by the Jews. When he comes my son, get yourself crucified with Him and in this way you will save our entire lineage from torments.” While Isaon was telling those things to his son, a woman ran in, seized by a demon, sat on the tree and began talking: “Be it on a bier or a scaffold: take me to the Kingdom of Heaven!” She has barely said it and an angel of the Lord came in and struck the woman who guarded the tree: the demon immediately fled from her. The woman got well and from that moment did not leave the church. She went to the place called *Razboiste* and there she served until the end of her life.

The Lord God Jesus willed to be born in the time of Herod. Elsewhere we will describe how God was born and how the innocents were massacred because of Him, how He was swathed and Joseph was listed [as his father] with the Mother of God Mary and how he grieved with her. Such was the decree of Tsar Augustus: everyone had to be listed [in the census]. Phanid had only one daughter and after much pleading gave her to a man of the palace to enter her; because of that the Virgin was listed in Tarsus.

One day, when Jesus was ten years old, he went with some of his friends to [the river] Jordan and there he found the head of Adam. Jesus told to the head: “This is my handiwork” and wrote on it with His finger: “Adam, Adam’s head.” After Adam died, they laid him down next to Paradise. In the day He was born our Lord commanded that Jordan overflowed, reached to the grave of Adam, and carried his bones to the four corners of the earth from which he was created. This is how he was baptized in his bones: first by Jordan, then by the sea, and the third time by our Lord Jesus Christ. His head was carried to Jerusalem. All of the citizens, great and small alike, flocked to see it and marveled at the head of their grandfather Adam for it was as big as a place for three hundred men to sit down. There were two princes then, their names were Mardarius and Thuras, and they quarreled between themselves. Mardarius insisted that it should be buried again while Thuras spoke “Let it stay in my house,” and further: “It is fitting that I possess the head of my forefather.” After much pleading he succeeded in taking it. He brought the head of Adam in his house, prepared a good place by the gate, and put it there. The strangers who went in and out looked at it and marveled. For as long as Thuras was alive, he used to look at the head and say: “Let them put me on the head and bury me so.” However, when he died, Christ learned [about his wish] and forbid it. It was ordered to take it out of town, to the place called Golgotha;

there they buried it. The name of that place was Kranievo, for it was here that our Master and Lord, the Savior God Jesus Christ was to taste death and be baptized by the blood streaming down from His pure and most pure ribs. That happened sixty years after the [re]burial of the head of Adam.

Jesus was twenty years old when He turned the water in the Kana of Galilee into wine in front of the *architriclinium* who was an elder. In the reign of Augustus a census was taken of the entire population. People were quite troubled by the census, for it was a great amount of work. The tsar himself was building fortresses at the time, and his son had roads built from fortress to fortress so that every one was very busy. Under that tsar even God pushed on the plow. One day Jesus was on his road to Bethlehem. He spotted a man who plowed by throwing the earth on the one side and circumnavigating the field. The Lord saw that he was wasting his day, took the plow in His hands, and plowed three furrows. Then He turned the plow, gave it back to him, and told him: “Farewell brother, keep plowing.” Oh, marvelous miracle! The Lord came and did not forgo His people but became a plowman! Oh, blessed wood that the Lord took in His hands! Oh, blessed plow and blessed stick! Oh, blessed oxen that walked before the Lord! Oh blessed land plowed by the Lord! Oh, blessed seed, which the Lord threw with His hand! Oh, blessed field! Oh, blessed road on which the Lord walked! Oh, blessed ground on which His feet stepped! Oh, blessed herd, to which the oxen belonged with which the Lord plowed! Oh, blessed plowman, whom the Lord saw and replaced! We will say what happened to the field, which the Lord plowed as well.

Following the death of Augustus, Seleukus inherited. Seleukus was pious and expected to see God. He went often to the church of God and prayed to be able to see God in his house. Once he entered to worship Him at nine o’clock and went to sleep together with the servant who prepared a bed for him in Solomon’s chapel. He reclined to rest until it was time for lunch. Suddenly, a bird flew above him and let go of a piece of excrement, which fell into his eye. He was very saddened and grieved because he thought that he would loose the pupils of his eyes. His courtiers kept his illness secret because he was afraid of the reproaches of his people and those subject to his power, as well as his officials; this way, if they drove him away, he would have something to eat in his blindness. He called his son Prob and sent him all over his tsardom and his provinces [to collect taxes] and ordered him to take none of his own servants along so no one would find out about

his blindness. When the tsar's son Prob set out he saw a twelve-year old boy by the roadside. He called him immediately and asked him: "Where are you from?" Jesus answered: "I am from the high places." Jesus wanted to tell him that He came from Heaven, but Prob thought that He was a highlander. He asked Him: "Do you know well the roads in the highlands as well as the villages and the towns?" Jesus told him: "I just came from there; of course I do." Prob said to him: "I have something to do in these mountain villages. Please, if you know the way, take me there." Jesus replied: "This is what I came for, to take you to the house of your Father." Prob did not understand Jesus's words and took him with himself to serve him. For this reason Jesus Himself said: "I did not come to be served; I came to serve."

When Prob came to the province of Jericho which is between the mountains, the locals did not accept Jesus and Prob friendly and were not very eager to pay their taxes. Jesus told them to give unto Caesar what was Caesar's and unto God what was God's. They collected many gifts from the province and reached the river called Vojasta where they stopped to rest. They went for a swim, they and their beasts, and some of the younger servants went to bathe and fish. Prob got in the water and told Jesus: "Come in, brother!" Jesus understood that Prob loved Him from the bottom of his heart and went in to swim. He took a fish and showed it to Prob, holding it with His left hand and crossing it with His right hand. He asked Prob: "Prob, do you know what kind of fish is this?" He answered: "I know not brother, I know not what kind of fish this is." Jesus told him: "What is in this fish?" and he said: "I told you, brother, I do not know!" Oh, marvelous miracle! Prob called himself God's brother for he liked Jesus' words. This is why it is good for people to fraternize: love is a good thing. He said to Prob: "That fish's head is for eating; its spleen cures eyesores; its stomach is for exorcising demons." He gave it to Prob and told him: "Keep this fish." When Prob heard these words he remembered his father's disease and thought about men's souls and exorcising of demons and was delighted. He quickly went out of the water, full of joy. Prob, who had in his heart and mind the disease of his father, took the fish and extracted its spleen to bring it to his father, for his father Seleukius was blind. At full moon his [Prob's] wife went berserk and his son was sickly. When he heard these words, he promptly ordered his servants to saddle his horse and took with himself whatever gold they had collected. He did not need to go to the remaining towns. Prob was so happy that he left the camp immediately, set off for his home and his father and

left behind Jesus, his servants, his people, and the presents for the tsar. When Seleukius heard that his son had come back, he was saddened and asked: “Why are you coming back so soon, my child? Did they find out about my blindness and drive you away?” Prob answered: “Not at all father! Listen, I will tell you what I heard and saw.” He took out the spleen and smeared it on the eyes of his father, the tsar. In that same moment the tsar was able to see again and ordered [Prob’s] wife and son to be called. He took the stomach, fumed it, and his wife and son immediately got well. Prob began to tell him the story: “I found a twelve-year old boy and took him along. As you ordered I took none of your servants with me. I took only him and made him my brother and your son.” He told his father all of Jesus’s words. When Seleukius heard that, we asked Prob: “What was that boy’s name?” Prob said: “His name is Jesus.” Then Seleukius understood everything and said: “Perhaps he is God whom we expected to come; the One whom I hoped to be God?” Tsar Seleukius was shaken up and said: “Can God grant health to me, my daughter-in-law, and my son?” Prob remembered the words of Jesus, who told him: “This is why I came, not to be served but to serve, and this is why I came, to take you to the home of your Father” and told him everything that he had heard from Jesus on the road. The words of Jesus struck him, including these words, “Give unto God what is God’s and unto Caesar what is Caesar’s.” While they were conversing, the shipment from the mountain-dwellers arrived. “Here,” Probe said to his father, “are the servants of this brother of mine about whom I told you.” Seleukius said: “Child, go out to greet Him and bring him here. I will make Him a relative of ours and of Ceasar’s.” Prob rushed to the servants, wishing to find Jesus, but Jesus was not there for He had hidden Himself. Prob went back to his father saddened and informed him that Jesus was not to be found among the servants. When Seleukius heard that Jesus had hidden Himself, he said: “Verily this is God whom we hoped to see!” From that moment he believed in God and ordered his family and all the people to believe and to expect the Coming of Christ.

There was a prince in that time, called Abgar. He had a servant in his house by the name of Luke who was a skillful trader. Once, when Luke was on business in Jerusalem he met a man called Ist, who was a merchant himself and stayed with him. Jesus was already thirty years old, had been baptized, had announced his divinity, and did everything openly. Before his baptism He kept his doings secret. When Luke heard about Jesus’s many feats and miracles he went back to Syria, to the

city where Abgar resided. His journey was 75 days or eight weeks. It happened that Luke was not able to return to Jerusalem for seven years. In the meantime the priests made Jesus archdeacon. They gave him the book of the prophet Isaiah to read it to the people. There was a piece in it that said: "He was taken like a sheep to slaughter and stood like a voiceless lamb before those who fleeced Him." He realized that the prophet was speaking about Him and told the people to sit down; they all delighted at His words. Luke told Abgar everything he had learned about Jesus: that he was a powerful man in Jerusalem who gave back the light of day to the blind and cleansed lepers. When Abgar heard that he immediately believed that Jesus was that God foretold by the prophets. He wrote and sent Him a letter, asking Him to come to save his people and see him. He gave the letter to Luke and told him: "Take this piece of fabric, and I will kiss it: it will be [the sign] of salvation for our city and for His intercession."

It happened in that time that one of the priests from the clergy of the House of God died. His name was Merkel. According to the rule of that church there could be no liturgy with fewer than forty priests. The thirty-nine then had to choose another priest. Here are their names: 1. Lefter. 2. Merkelin. 3. Ust. 4. Ziot. 5. Kondrad. 6. Valerion. 7. Rufin. 8. Terenti. 9. Ezekiah. 10. Hosiah. 11. Hazi. 12. Antim. 13. Merontim. 14. Solomon. 15. Valerion. 16. Dorodi. 17. Prinarch. 18. Agatonik. 19. Markim. 20. Hrisogon. 21. Agatonik. 22. Dorotim. 23. Sikiot. 24. Terontius. 25. Malech. 26. Castor. 27. Savarion. 28. Minigi. 29. Parivason. 30. Kyrion. 31. Hrisig. 32. Valerikin. 33. Amos. 34. Salimol. 35. Moses. 36. Aronion. 37. Lukion. 38. Alirilol. 39. Avsin. 40. Jesus. Arguing whose name was to be put on the list, they raised a great noise. Some said "this one," others [wanted] a noble, but the elders did not accept any of the persons proposed by the Jews. The first one turned out to be a liar and an unjust man; the second, a drunkard; the third, a robber; the fourth, a slanderer; the fifth, a troublemaker; the sixth, an adulterer; the seventh was sick all the time. They followed the sacred books, which said: "The truth is verified in the presence of two or three witnesses." After they had been going like this for a while a man called Ust came. He figured what they were arguing about and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, stood up and went to the Jews. "Do you wish me," he asked them, "to point out to you a person for the list of priests?" They said: "Go ahead." He told them: "Put down Jesus son of Mary." The priests called Mary and told her: "Mary, we know that your son is a learned man and teaches the people well, but he has no

father.” Then they asked her again: “Mary, do you know that according to the Law we cannot serve liturgy in the church unless there are forty priests? We would like to include Jesus in that number; however, how should we enter him? In what year, month, and day was he consecrated? Tell us, whose son is he?” Mary replied: “He has no father on earth neither of this earth. He was sent to me from Heaven and His Father is in Heaven. You will not find Him here, no matter how long you might seek Him.” When Mary said this they got angry because she said “His Father is in Heaven” and presently drove her out of the synagogue, [saying]: “Who has seen God to come unto her and when?” Others said: “If you have not heard anyone to speak evil of Him, neither His close neighbors nor others, nor anyone among those present here, then what she said is true.” Then they ordered that Mary be brought back, and told her: “Tell us the truth: what did you hear from the person that announced that joyful news to you?” She explained to them what she had been told by Archangel Gabriel. Some of them were delighted to hear her account; others got agitated and accused her that she was not telling the truth. The [latter] told her: “Mary, right now is not the time to tell lies.” She answered them: “I spoke the truth: Mercy and Truth met. Why don’t you believe me?” They send her out again and began to argue anew. Many did not want even to hear that His Father was in Heaven. They called Mary a second time and told her: “How long are we going to argue with you? You repeat the same thing over and over again. However, now we are going to find out why you aren’t telling us the truth.” And they immediately called old women to check on her virginity. The old women checked her and saw that she was a pure virgin. They marveled and said: “Not only is she a virgin, but she is pure and unpolluted.” At this moment they believed and entered Jesus in the ecclesiastical books. Oh, great miracle! The One praised in Heaven by angels, archangels, powers and forces, thrones, cherubs and seraphs and beginnings, was now praised by the hands of priests. Oh, great miracle! The One praised by every breathing and living creature, the One who covers the sky with clouds, is now dressed in a *phylon* by the priests. Oh, marvelous miracle! The one who gives power to every thing that breathes is now commanded to teach the people!

As soon as they said that, Jesus went out and saw the centurion Longinus dressed in priestly robes. He said: “It is not proper for Him to walk on the ground!” He then took off the cloth from his head and laid it on the road, and Jesus walked on it. The cloth was seventy elbows long. Longinus praised the God Christ. Oh, great miracle!

Longinus stretched his cloth for the One who stretched the sky like a skin. Spatnik, who sat in *Razboiste*, saw that and the glory that was given to Jesus and said: "Verily, this is God about whom my father spoke!" He prayed in himself, saying: "When will the Lord Himself sit down on that tree?" And kept repeating: "This is the tree of Judgment. Oh, great miracle!"

Many other most marvelous miracles happened then. Seven years later Luke came back from Edessa, carrying the cloth and the letter. He came to Jerusalem, learned about the most marvelous miracles of Jesus and wanted to see him but was not able to due to the great multitude of people. Jesus called in a loud voice: "Luke [servant of] Abgar!" Luke heard him and tried to force his way through the crowd, but wasn't able to go through. Jesus told him again: "Bring me what Abgar gave you." He gave Him the letter. While Jesus was reading it Luke looked at him attentively and thought how he could paint Him. Jesus knew about his thought and said: "Bring me what you are carrying!" He got frightened: "I have nothing on me!" He raised his arms and the cloth fell down. Jesus took it and put it on his face, then folded it back and gave it to Luke. After that Jesus said again: "Blessed are those who saw me and believed but thrice blessed are those who did not see me and still believed!" Many believed then. Then He let Luke go. Luke left, found Ust, and asked him: "How come you do not believe that Jesus is the Truth?" He told him: "We believe but cannot profess it openly because the Jews have sworn to put to death everyone who is found to believe in Jesus." And he told him how Jesus was entered in the ecclesiastical books. Luke promptly went back to Abgar, who found an image on the cloth, an icon of God, and to this very day it is preserved in the royal palace. Luke left Abgar and followed Christ, and became one of His evangelists and apostles.

Since that time the Jews began to scheme against Jesus and planned to kill Him. When Jesus became sixty years old everything that was written about Him in the books of all the prophets came true. From that moment Judas sought a good time to betray him. During the rule of Pilate the Lord Christ went to the crucifix voluntarily. Pilate washed his hands and handed Him over to them; they crowned Him with the crown of thorns. Then they cut the tree of Moses into three parts. From the piece that was at the root they made the cross of Jesus, as He had said: "It is me, and my feet are of the root of the tree." The middle part they made into a cross for Spatnik and from the third part they made a cross for the other robber. This is how all that had

been foretold came to pass, “I am counted among the lawless.” When Spatnik was crucified with Christ he was seventy years old because he was born ten years before Him and spent these seventy years in the place called *Razboiste*. He gave up his soul amid much pain. All this happened because of the crime of Adam. That is why God took on the flesh, was nailed down, and his ribs were pierced so that blood and water poured out, and Adam got baptized. This is why He tasted the bitter taste, to wipe clean the sweet sin, and drank vinegar to forgive humankind. Did He not know that what he would taste was vinegar and spleen?

What land produced the thorns? What sea produced that sponge which they gave Christ to drink from? From what flock did the spleen come? What place gave birth to that reed? Who were the craftsmen who made the nails that nailed Christ, God of Heaven and earth? What place produced the wine from which that vinegar was made? Oh, great miracle? The One who had granted to earth all good and every joy accepted only evil from His creatures. Oh, great miracle! The One who came to deliver humankind from temptation and the ill guidance of the devil willed to suffer evil from the hands of His closest ones!

Glory to Your mercy, Lord. Glory, Christ, to Your Coming to us earthlings, and Your descent into Hell to set all the patriarchs and prophets free and grant us, together with the robber, Your Kingdom.

Let us mention what happened to the field that God plowed. A certain [man] among the powerful took it by force and built a shed for his flock, which still stands will stand for all ages. Amen.

The letter of Tsar Abgar on lead amulet, tenth century.

94

The legend of the letter of King Abgar to Christ is an early Syrian work which, in its Byzantine Greek version, was widely spread in the medieval cultural commonwealth dominated by Byzantium. It was used as a “white magic” piece with apothropeian functions, warding off evil. The tenth-century Bulgarian version translated here combines texts from several of the Byzantine traditions and might well be a home-grown product, related to the works of priest Jeremiah. Edition: Kazimir Popkonstantinov, “The Letter of Abgar on a Tenth-Century Amulet,” in *Ars Philologica. Festschrift Baldur Panzer* (Vienna, 1999), 649–54; idem, “Pismoto na tsar Avgar do Iisus Christos vav vizantijsko-slavjanskijat svjat spored pametnici ot Filipi, Genua, i Balgarija,” in Ts. Stepanov and V. Vachkova, eds., *Civitas Divino-Humana. In honorem annorum LX Georgii Bakalov* (Sofia, 2004), 413–14.

+ Letter of Abgar sent to Jesus Christ the Savior through Ananias the courier in the city of Jerusalem. I was pleased to learn that Jesus Christ

has appeared in the city of Jerusalem and rejoiced to hear about you and about the cures you perform without magic and witchcraft. They say that a blind man saw again...and that you have made the lame to walk, you have made the deaf to hear and the mute to speak, and you have driven away unclean spirits and demons, and you have cured others who suffered from sores, and have made men to raise from the dead. When I heard that I realized that you are either God who has come down from the heavens or you are the Son of God who has come to work miracles. And I wrote this to you to beg you to get up and come over to me to heal the fever that I have for I have heard as well that the Jews are clamoring against you and want to kill you. My city is small but there is no trouble here. Amen.

95 *Prayers against nezhit, most likely late ninth or early tenth centuries.*

Apothropic prayers and incantations against evil spirits go back to pagan times and are recorded in early Coptic and Greek texts. Like the letter of Abgar, the Old Bulgarian versions combine several Byzantine Greek texts and reflect a rather free treatment of the Greek prototypes, which have been available to Bulgarian authors immediately after the conversion. Editions: Bonju Angelov and Dimiter Genov, eds., and trans., *Stara balgarska literatura v primeri, prevodi, i bibliografija* (Sofia, 1922), 368; Benjo Tzonev, *Opis na slavjanskate rakopisi v Sofijskata narodna biblioteka*, 2 (Sofia, 1923), 133; Vatroslav Jagic, *Istorija serbohrovaatskoj literaturji* (Kazan, 1871), 106.

Evil spirit [*nezhit*] fell from the sky, blind shepherds saw it, chased it without feet, caught it without hands, tied it without a rope, killed it without a knife, roasted it without fire, and ate it without mouths. The evil spirit seeped from the bones into the flesh, into the skin, into the hairs, and melted away like salt into the water. Let it be the same with the servant of God...now and for all centuries.

Adam had an evil spirit [*nezhit*] and gave it to Eve, Eve [gave it] to the lead, the lead [gave it] to the sea, the sea [gave it] to the sand, the sand [gave it] to the beach, the beach [gave it] to the grass, the grass [gave it] to the dew, the dew [gave it] to the sun. The sun went up and dried up the dew and the evil spirit died in the servant of God now and for the eternal centuries.

Jesus came down from the Seventh Heaven, from His well-prepared dwelling, came across the evil spirit [*nezhit*], and told him: "Evil spirit, where are you going?" The evil spirit responded: "I am going into a human's head, to muddle the brain, crush the teeth, deafen the ears,

break down the jaws, blind the eyes, bent the mouth, stuff the nose, so that the head hurts day and night.” Christ told it: “Evil spirit, go back to the forest, enter into a deer’s head or into a ram’s head, for it can put up with every kind of suffering; stay there and wait until the end of heaven and earth comes, and fear God who sits on the cherubs’ throne until He comes to judge the entire universe including you, demonic evil spirit, originator of every affliction.” Evil spirit, I swear you to leave the servant of God (say the name here) in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Seven angels and seven archangels set out, sharpening seven knives and carrying seven candles. Michael and Gabriel met them and told them: “Seven angels, where are you going?” And they responded: “We are going to cut down the evil spirit [*nezhit*] and burn it down with candles and wipe away the blood from the eyes of the servant of God (say the name), always, and today, and for ever.”

Saint Michael Gabriel went carrying an iron bow and iron arrows, wanting to shoot does and deer. He did not find does and deer, he found an evil spirit [*nezhit*], sitting down and splitting rocks apart. He asked it: “Who are you, sitting here and splitting rocks apart?” It answered: “I am an evil spirit; I will split the human head apart and will take out its brain and shed its blood!” Michael Gabriel said: “Damned wicked evil spirit, neither take out the brain nor split the head apart, but go to a deserted mountain and enter into a deer’s head for it is patient and can put up with this. If I find you within seven days I will cut you down and shoot you down.” The evil spirit begged: “Do not cut me down, do not shoot me down, I will flee to the mountain and into a deer’s head.”

Inscription on lead amulet, Odartsi, northwestern Bulgaria, tenth–eleventh centuries.

Edition: *AI*, 1, 113.

(Front) Lord God Christ has won. The evil spirit [*nezhit*] came from the Red Sea and met Jesus and He asked him where he was going. He answered that he was going into a human to gnaw on the brain, shed the blood, and crush the bones. And He told him: “Evil spirit, I swear you not to go into the human but go to a deserted place and find a deer and . . . and go into their heads (Back) and gnaw on the brain, crush the bones, tear the sinews, for these can suffer any poison. Go and do

not come back forever, until the day prepared for the Last Judgment. Fear God, who sits on the throne of the cherubs, before whom tremble [all things] visible and invisible.” You too, fear God, glory to Him for the ages, amen.

- 97 *Inscription on lead amulet, Oreshak, northwestern Bulgaria, tenth-eleventh centuries.*
Edition: *AI*, 1, 119.

(Front) The witch talked about the fruit tree and the *archstrategos* Michael: If you have not ordered me to... (Back)...Mamont...fast...I swore to him and from on high he told me so you take mercy on a witch for all ages amen.

- 98 *Inscription on lead amulet from Pacuiul lui Soare on the Danube, Rumania, tenth century.*
Edition: *AI*, 1, 123.

(Front) Jesus descended from the Seventh Heaven and met the evil spirit [*nezhit*] as he went and Jesus told him where are you going evil spirit and the evil spirit told him I am going into a human to gnaw on the brain, crush the bones, blind the eyes, deafen the ears and [He] told him go into a deserted place and into a deer head and into (Back) a ram for it can take it. Now and in the future and for all ages. Amen. Jesus Christ wins.

- 99 *Inscription on lead amulet from Pet Mogili, northwestern Bulgaria, tenth century.*
Edition: *AI*, 1, 141.

(Front) + The cross was erected Christ was crucified Christ resurrected man was saved.

- 100 *Inscription on lead amulet from Calarasi, Rumania, late tenth or beginning eleventh century.*
Edition: *AI*, 1, 19.

(Front): And the saint said: ...who is over fever and pyrexia. And the saint said. His name is Michael. He prays to...Son of God deliver from...the enemy.

(Back):...forbid fever to exit from this...from this head and...these ears, these nostrils, from...from the leg, from his entire body.

Inscription on lead amulet, fortress of Rujno district of Silistra, northwestern Bulgaria, tenth century. 101
Edition: *AI*, 1, 237.

(Front) Flee fever from that man, God will drive you away. Flee fever from that man, God spoke and drove you away. Flee (back) fever from that man, God drives you away.

Razumnik, *tenth-century apocryphal cathechesis.* 102
The *Razumnik* is one of the few extant products of early medieval Bulgarian popular culture. Though modeled upon existing early Christian and Byzantine works in the Orthodox tradition, it is an original composition that enjoyed a wide reading audience. Edition: Jordan Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, (Sofia, 1925), 259–64.

Question: How did God create heaven and earth?

Answer: He took cream from the water, and it congealed, and [this is how] God created heaven and earth.

Q: And how did God make the sun and the moon?

A: After God made heaven and earth, he thought about how to make man, and how He will be born of him, and how He will be crucified and delivered to death. And when God thought about death, a tear dropped from the eye of the Lord, and that tear God called the sun. The moon, on its part, is [made] from God's throne. The stars are [made from] God's flesh and the angels are [made] of God's spirit and [from] fire.

Q: Are the sun, or the moon, or the stars huge?

A: The sun is sixty *poprista* larger than the entire earth; the moon is half the size of the earth; every star is fifteen days walk.

Q: How many faces do the sun and the moon have?

A: The sun has a thousand faces, and the moon [has] three hundred and forty faces.

Q: Tell me what supports the earth?

A: Very high waters.

Q: What supports the water?

A: A large flat rock.

Q: And what supports the rock?

A: Four golden whales.

Q: And what supports the golden whales?

A: A river of fire.

Q: And what supports the fire?

A: An iron oak, planted before anything else, and its root touch God's power.

Q: [lacuna]?

A: On Tuesday God planted Paradise, on Wednesday he made the waters accordingly, on Thursday he commanded, and all animals, crawling beasts, and feathered birds were created, on Friday [He] created Adam, and on Saturday He breathed in him life-giving spirit.

Q: From how many parts did God create Adam?

A: From eight parts: 1/ his body from earth; 2/ his blood from the sea; 3/ his bones from stone; 4/ his soul from wind and God's spirit; 5/ his reason from a cloud; 6/ his eyes from the sun and the dew; 7/ his thought from the speed of angels, laughter, and weeping. Thus did the Holy Spirit put all this together and said: If this man has offspring from the sea, it will be gluttonous; if from the sun, it will be wise, prudent, and honorable; if from the cloud, it will be deceitful in everything; if from the wind, it will be angry; if from the rocks, it will be merciful, and if from the speed of angels it will be humble and good in everything.

Q: How many are the human species?

A: Two: Adam and Eve.

Q: How did God make the devil?

A: When God made heaven and earth, God saw his shadow in the waters and said: come out, brother, and be with me. And it came out like a man and God gave it the name Samael.

Q: How did it fall from God?

A: When God was planting Paradise and commanded it to be planted, Samael kept stealing everything. Then he went out, secretly, and heaped it all at another place. The Lord said: You steal from me; you are banished! And Samael came out and said: Lord, bless what we planted. Let it be blessed, and I am here in the middle of it. Samael went to see the three that he had stolen to plant. As he saw the three, he became all black, and the three banished him from Paradise. Then God called him the devil.

Q: Who sat on the throne higher than the Lord?

A: Adam, when the Lord lifted him up on his shoulder and breathed the soul in him.

Q: What was the first language that Adam spoke?

A: Halleluiah, that is, in the Syrian language, "Praise God in Heavens."

Q: Where did Adam sit, after he left Paradise?

A: In Eden, in front of Paradise's gates.

Q: Pray tell, who made the first sacrifice on earth?

A: Abel slaughtered a sheep.

B: Who is the first shepherd?

A: Abel.

Q: Who taught the servant to plow?

A: Cain.

Q: Where did wheat come from?

A: [Archangels] Michael and Gabriel took it from Paradise and threw it upon the earth.

Q: Where did wickedness come from?

A: Wickedness came from Cain, as did lies, slander, robbery, and manslaughter.

Q: Who accomplished seven great deeds, from which the seven parts of the world perished?

A: Cain: 1/ destroyed the soul; 2/ inherited Hell; 3/ polluted earth; 4/ saddened the father; 5/ deprived the mother of her offspring; 6/ turned away from God; 7/ separated from his brother.

Q: In how many parts did God divide Adam's virtues?

A: In seven parts: 1/ To Abraham He gave hospitability; 2/ to Samson, strength; 3/ to Joseph, beauty; 4/ to David, royal meekness; 5/ to Abesalom, hair; 6/ to Solomon, wisdom; 7/ to Job, wealth.

Q: Who was the first one to whom God gave literacy?

A: To Set, Adam's son.

Q: And why did he need numbers?

A: [lacuna] Word, and the Word was in the beginning and the Word was with God. So it is written in the [books of the] *Parimies*: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. From this Set tsars were born.

Q: Who was the first one to pray to God?

A: Enoch.

Q: Who lived one hundred and nine years and wanted to eat, drink, and become literate?

A: Methuselah.

Q: Who invented the Latin books?

A: Nunael, Umam, and Breitul.

Q: Who invented the Greek books?

A: Mercury.

Q: And who invented the Bulgarian books?

A: Cyril the Philosopher.

Q: Tell me who was the first to build a temple of God on earth?

A: Tsar Solomon.

Q: Who was the first bishop of Jerusalem?

A: Jacob.

Q: And who was the first archdeacon?

A: St Stephen.

Q: And who was the first priest?

A: Melchizedek, the son of Noah, was called a presbyter.

Q: Who carries the heaviest burden?

A: The priest takes on himself the sins of the people.

Q: Who was the first one to offer sacrifice to God?

A: Noah, when he went out of the ship.

Q: Where does Adam sit?

A: In the Fourth Heaven, sending the righteous to Paradise and the sinful to sorrows.

Q: How many people die in a day and a night?

A: Twelve thousand and twenty four people, and as many are born.

Q: How many among them are righteous?

A: Three of them rest in Abraham's bosom; the rest bang with their soul on the gates of torture.

Q: How many Heavens are there?

A: Seven, and on the Seventh One God rests.

Q: Why did God create mountains?

A: Mountains strengthen the earth so that it does not shake upon the waters.

Q: What is the very hot bath [steam] that exudes from the earth?

A: The earth rests upon water, and the water upon fire. And because of it water streams along the veins. If it did cool down when passing through thick layers of earth, one could not even look at it, so hot it would be.

Q: How large is earth?

A: The earth is as thick as the distance between the earth and the sky.

Q: Why is earth full of water?

A: Just as the body is full of blood, so the earth is full of water.

Q: How far is the sky from the earth?

A: As much as it is from east to west, so much it is from the earth to the sky.

Q: Is the sun far from the moon?

A: As much as it is from the earth to the moon, so much it is from the moon to the sky and the stars. The stars are fixed upon the sky, and the moon and the two Stars [the Morning Star and the Evening Star] float in the air.

Q: How do the stars set?

A: The sky rotates, that is why they set.

Q: How does the sun rise for a long day?

A: The sun has one hundred and eighty three thrones and every morning angels carry it.

Q: And how does it set and rise?

A: When the sun sets, angels take it and carry it to the Lord's throne, rest it on the Lord's wing, and sing incessant songs. When they reach the seventh song, the angels untie the throne, take the sun, and carry it eastwards, and put it on the throne. And for that reason it rises for a long day.

Q: Why do cocks cry into the night?

A: When the angels take the sun and carry it to the east, the Cherubs clap their wings. Then every bird on earth trembles. This is what the cocks proclaim to the world.

Q: Where does the sea send the waters that empty into it so it does not overflow?

A: Just as carrion is food for the beasts, so are the waters for the sea.

Q: What does salt do for the sea?

A: Salt is for the sea what fat is for the body.

Q: From where do the clouds take the large amount of water that they carry?

A: No living soul knows where that water comes from, for it is in the abyss.

Q: How does water augment?

A: The clouds take but a little, and when they see light, it augments. For the prophet said: "Combed all hairs on the hide and it became bigger."

Q: What causes draughts and what causes rainy weather?

A: There is a tsar of the waters. When he descends into the depths of the sea, his commanders go with him. Then there is a draught. But when the water tsar ascends from the depths and his commanders with him, then water springs out from trees and stones, the clouds take it, and sprinkle the earth.

Q: Why did God put Cain on the moon?

A: To see the virtues he lost and the iniquities that began with him.

Q: How long did Abel lay unburied?

A: Nine hundred and thirty years, until they buried Adam, his father.

Q: And how come he did not become putrid and stinky?

A: Because neither worms nor flies were commanded to eat yet.

Q: How do strong winds arise?

A: When Cain cries, then strong winds arise.

Q: How did Lamech, being blind, shoot Cain?

A: Because the wrath of God fell upon Cain, he crouched, his head was between his legs, and he shook like a reed. And the chief of Lamech thought it was a beast, and directed Lamech's arrow, and it shot Cain.

Q: From where did fire come?

A: An angel lit it up from the pupil of God and carried it to Adam.

Q: Why didn't God make woman from clay as He did man, but from his rib?

A: The angels requested this from God. The Lord said: I did it so that they are dear to one another.

PART THREE

BYZANTINE RULE IN THE
BULGARIAN LANDS, 1018–1185

Seals of Bulgarian Nobility in Byzantine Service

Seal of Prusian, son of Tsar Ioan Vladislav.

103

After Basil II conquered Bulgaria in 1018, members of the royal family and great nobles were co-opted in the Byzantine ruling class. Prusian, Vladislav's eldest son, received the title *magister* in 1018. There are speculations that he engaged in an attempt to restore the Bulgarian state tradition and even sought Hungarian help for his projects, but the evidence is meager. This seal belongs to the foundation established or endowed by him. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 176.

(r) (image of Archangel Michael)

(v) Seal of the monastery of Prusian

Seal of Alusian, Ioan Vladislav's second son.

104

The attribution of the seal is disputable, but it does seem to have belonged to Alusian, Vladislav's second son. In 1018 he was made a *patrician*, married a noble Armenian, and in 1040 was recorded as military governor [*strategos*] of Theodosiopolis (now Erzerum) in Byzantine Armenia. He fell out of grace shortly thereafter. To reinstate himself in the emperor's good books, in 1041–1042 he helped put down the Bulgarian uprising under Peter Delian and was granted the title of *magister* for his effort. His descendants Samuel Alusian, Constantine Alusian, David Alusian Alexios Alusian, and George Alusian were fully assimilated in the Byzantine system and held high provincial offices in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, documented by their seals. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 177, and 179–96 for seals of other members of the family.

(r) (image of St Basil)

(v) Lord help Basil Alusian *vestiarch* and *strategos*

Saints' Lives

St Cyril's Conversion of the Bulgarians (The Legend of Thessaloniki),
southwestern Bulgaria, eleventh–twelfth centuries.

105

Although this historical forgery is most likely the product of a post-medieval environment, it does seem to contain a layer from the time of the Byzantine rule of Bulgaria. In its sentiment the *Legend* is close to the circle of apocryphal

works from the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, which stress superiority in Orthodoxy and steadfast piety as specifically Bulgarian traits. The Byzantine attitude toward the Bulgarians is overstated and the Bulgarians' pride in their written tradition and their Orthodox faith is emphasized in a manner echoing other works from the period. The verdict on its origins and specific purpose is still out. Edition: Angelov, *Iz starata literatura*, 2, with critical analysis of the two extant manuscripts.

I was born in Cappadocia and I studied in Damascus. One day, as I was in the church of the great Patriarchy of Alexandria, I heard a voice that came to me from the altar, telling me: "Cyril, Cyril, go to the land of the Slavic people called Bulgarians, because God has chosen you to convert them and give them the law. I was much saddened for I did not know where the land of the Bulgarians was. I went to Cyprus, but as I did not hear a word about the Bulgarian land there, I thought about turning back. I was afraid though not to end like the prophet Jonas and went to Crete. There they told me: "Go to the city of Thessaloniki."

I went there and appeared before the metropolitan Ioan. He laughed at me when I told him [about the mission] and said to me: "Oh, mindless old man, the Bulgarians are cannibals and they will eat you." Then I went to the market and heard Bulgarians talking. My heart got so fearful that I felt as if I was in Hell and in darkness. One day, on the Holy Sunday, I went out of the church and sat down on the marble, thoughtful and saddened. Then I saw a dove that was speaking and carrying in its beak a bundle of sticks, wrapped up double. It dropped them on my bosom and I counted them and found out that they were thirty two. I put them under my dress and took them over to the metropolitan. However, they sank in my body, and I forgot the Greek language. When the metropolitan send for me to join him at the table, I did not understand what they were telling me in Greek. Then everyone came and they marveled. Also, they hid me.¹

However, the Bulgarians heard about me, and the great prince Desimir of Moravia, Radivoi of Preslav, and all Bulgarian princes gathered around Thessaloniki and waged war for three years, shedding much blood.² And they said: "Turn over to us the man whom God sent us!" And they surrendered me. The Bulgarians took me with great joy and

¹ That is, locked him up.

² A possible echo of the sixth and seventh-century Slavic attacks on Thessaloniki.

led me to the city of Raven on the river Bregalnitsa. I invented thirty two letters for them. I taught them a little, but they achieved much by themselves. They, the Lord said, will render to God the Orthodox faith and Christianity.

Byzantine Greek Life of St Clement of Ohrid by Archbishop Theophylactus of Ohrid (1050–1126), early twelfth century (excerpts). 106

The *Life of St Clement* provides the fullest and most reliable information about the Slavic disciples' fate and Clement's life and deeds in Bulgaria. Written in Greek toward the beginning of the twelfth century, the *Life* builds on the local tradition in southwestern Bulgaria and on several occasions hints at the existence of earlier Old Bulgarian text on which Archbishop Theophylactus drew. Edition: Alexander Milev ed., *Theofilakt Ohridski. Žitije na Kliment Ohridski. Tekst, prevod, uvod, i objasnenija* (Sofia, 1955).

1. Come, children, listen to me, come all of you who fear God and I will tell you a story so that you learn about the other generation and the sons who will be born, so that the people who are now created praise God. This is what David said and today we say it together with him. Verily, we are to tell everyone and everywhere about the greatness of God not only because the praise of God has no limits as we believe but also because as much as we do speak and narrate, there is more of which we cannot tell and also because to announce the greatness of the deeds of God is like a premonition for the heedless who are as if asleep and will awaken them to perform good deeds.

2. Many believe that our age is somewhat inferior to the ancients, and that the ancient times shone with miracles and were adorned with the lives of men who, although clothed in bodies lived almost incorporeal lives, while nothing resembling this had been granted by God to our generation. That is why those people who have unsure and deficient grasp of things prove woefully incapable for righteous life, for the current human nature is not conducive to it. [In fact] the essence of nature is the same and has not changed and the Lord preserved not a few men for our times as well who, without bending a knee before no one among men³ shone with the light of their lives for the glory of their heavenly Father, who became the lights of the world and possessed the Word of life.⁴

³ 3 Kings 19:18; Romans 11:4.

⁴ Phil. 2:15–16.

3. In the same manner venerable fathers and teachers enlightened in these recent times the Bulgarian land, shining bright with their doctrines and miracles and presented themselves in strength before God on account of their lives and teachings. I desire to describe their entire lives even though the task surpasses the limits of my eloquence. Yet, even if I offer a small thing, still I will testify with it about God's grace and love of humanity, and that He is with us and will be with us through all the days to the end⁵ as He promised, and by this I will demonstrate to all the people that our nature has not changed, but our desire [to do good] has been perverted.

[Chapters 4–33 discuss the lives and deeds of Cyril and Methodius]

34. What tongue can account for the evils that iniquity performed when it came to power? It was, indeed, like a forest fire strengthened by the wind. The Franks forced Methodius' pupils to join the erroneous teaching, but they defended the faith of the fathers. The former were ready to carry out everything, the latter were resigned to suffer everything. The Franks tortured some inhumanly, looted the houses of others, adding greed to their inhumanity and yet others, old and reaching David in age, they dragged naked through thorny bushes. Worthy of the fate and gibbet of Judas, they sold to the Jews the younger presbyters and deacons. For just like the former sold Christ so they sold to the Jews, the bearers of eternal grief, the servants of Christ or, better, His friends as He called them Himself;⁶ I would dare call them the anointed ones. Indeed, there were many of them, for only the servants of the altar among them were no less than two hundred persons, as we already said.

35. Those who had the position of teachers—like the famous Gorazd, about whom we talked often and whom Methodius' virtue put on the [metropolitan] throne because he hailed from Moravia and was fluent in both languages, Greek and Slavonic, and with the toppling of whom the wickedness of the heretics deprived the see of its adornment; like the priest Clement, very famous himself; like Laurentius, Naum, Angelarius, and many other glorious men—they put in iron chains and locked them up in prison where they could get no consolation for neither relatives nor acquaintances dared to visit them

⁵ Matthew 28:20.

⁶ John 15:14–15.

in whatever way. But the Lord, who consoles the humble,⁷ heals the broken hearts, and grants joy to the soul with solace that correspond to the grief that troubles it, comforted the saints by sending them help through the Holy [Spirit].

36. Even though they were tormented by iron chains, they did not abandon prayer but, after they sang the songs of the third hour, continued with the words of the psalms with which we pray to be granted again the Holy Spirit that was sent to the apostles at the third hour. God looked down on earth and made it shake by a terrible earthquake, as it happened in the past when Paul prayed; great noise came from the sky, the chains loosened and the ones bound by them were set free,⁸ tied up as they were by their unflinching love for Christ.

37. God shook the earth and it was troubled. Naturally, the citizens of that town got disturbed and so shaken by what happened that they marveled and could not figure out the meaning of the divine omen. But when they approached the prison and saw what had happened to the saints and how after their chains had fallen they were completely free, and when they heard the heavens rejoice as David put it, they ran to the prince and told him: “What is this? How long are we going to oppose the power of God? How long will we avert our eyes away from the light of truth? We have ears and we don’t hear, we have eyes and we don’t see like the idols of David or, if you prefer, like the people Isaiah talks about who received the spirit of deep stupor.⁹ Are we not capable of understanding what happened? Is the divine omen not frightening enough? Would not be better for us to show respect to those who have been freed from the shackles?”

38. But the tongues of the heretics tried to slander the miracle like the tongue of the Pharisees slandered the miracles once worked by the Lord. They said: “This is all deception and tricks of the magicians” or, in other words, they ascribed the extraordinary occurrence to Beelzebub while they were themselves imbued with his power.¹⁰ After that, because the prince who was foolish by nature did not comprehend what had happened, they bound the saints in chains even heavier than before and tormented them even more mercilessly in the prison. Three days later, again, at the time they [the disciples] prayed in the

⁷ 2 Corinth. 7:6.

⁸ Acts 16:25–26.

⁹ Isaiah 29:10.

¹⁰ Luke 11:15; Mark 3:22.

third hour, the same thing occurred: earthquake, noises from heaven, and chains sliding away from them. Then the enemies of God once again, without reporting this to the prince, subjected the saints to the same tortures, which they themselves fully deserved to endure before the Tribunal of Justice.

39. Thus God became the subject of contention between two parties: on the one hand there was the deed of hatred, on the other, the teaching of mercy. After ten days the saints were visited again “from on high and from the East,”¹¹ but the heartless heretics even now did not mitigate their cruelty. What was bent did not straighten up and their mind’s deficiency to know what was good was not amended.¹² Thus they added to the pain from the wounds even more torments for the saints. Having received the prince’s permission to act as they saw fit, they led the saints out of prison, flogged them with cruel lashes, as one might say, showing mercy neither for their white hairs, nor for the frailty that the incessant afflictions have wrought on the bodies of the saints.

40. Of course the prince, otherwise a slave to the heretics, knew nothing about this for he happened to be absent. Had he been there, they would not have done such things to the confessors of the truth because, even though he was a thousand times more loyal to the Franks and was a cruel half-savage, still, he was afraid of the power of the saintly men, especially after God performed a miracle for the third time. Thus, after such inhuman tortures and without allowing the saints to get some food, because they did not allow anyone to give even a crumble of bread to the servants of Christ or, more precisely, to Christ,¹³ they handed them over to soldiers to take them away to different places round about the Danubian provinces, sentencing the citizens of Heaven to a perpetual exile from their city.

41. The soldiers, German men of cruel nature, which they made even more so on account of their orders took the saints, led them outside of the city, and after disrobing them, dragged them around naked. Thus with one deed they caused a double evil, dishonoring them and making them suffer in the ice-cold fog that always hangs low in the lands around the Danube. Besides, they used to put swords to their [the disciples’]

¹¹ Luke 1:78.

¹² Eccles. 1:15.

¹³ Matthew 25:40.

necks, ready to stab, and lances to their chests, ready to bloody them, so that they would not die only one time, but feel deadly terror every time they anticipated the stroke. Such were the orders given to the soldiers by the enemies. Taking them to a place far away from the city, they left them alone and took the road back to the city.

42. The confessors of Christ, knowing that God commands those cast out from such a city to flee to another,¹⁴ longed for Bulgaria, thought about Bulgaria, and hoped that Bulgaria is ready to offer them peace. They had, however, to conceal their tracks if they wanted to get there. They tried, therefore, to remain unnoticed by any one's eye, suffered deprivation of food and clothing, and bore all kinds of afflictions. Afraid [of being discovered] they parted and took to different countries for it was the will of God that they bring more provinces into the fold of the Gospels.

43. Taking with himself Naum and Angelarius, Clement took the road to the Danube and reached a village where they hoped to find support for their bodies, being much weakened by the lack of food and clothing. They inquired about who in the village was a God-loving person, hospitable, and known for pious life, and on account of this considered the son of Christ's peace,¹⁵ and when they found such a man, they were invited to be guests of his house. He had an only son, handsome and in the flower of youth. As soon as the strangers stepped into the house, the son, the handsome youth, his father's only consolation, the glorious offspring of the family, passed away.

44. What, do you think, the father felt at that moment? What words did he not speak to the foreigners, burdened with the grief after his child! "This is what I get for my hospitality? This is why opened my door to you, to shut down my house by loosing my heir? This is why I stretched my right hand to you, to loose my only right hand? It is a day of grief in which you came to our village! Oh dark light that pointed my house to you! You are certainly witches and enemies of the One God and I am punished by Him for welcoming under my roof those whom He hates. Many have I welcomed into my house, presenting to God from my property by serving them according to my means. And the Lord always multiplied my goods; it did not diminish but grew, my expenses turned into gain, and the blessed seed yielded blessed harvest

¹⁴ Matthew 10:23.

¹⁵ John 14:27; Col. 3:15.

and overabundant field.¹⁶ But now! Oh my most precious son, most handsome and dearer to me than all of my possessions, dearer than my own heart and more desired than my own life, now you perished because of the coming of these impious men! There is no doubt: they are evil, hateful, and envious spirits, murderers who delight in the death of children. Yet you will not escape vengeance even if you attempt to bewitch everyone for you are in the hands of a father who now grieves after his son, his handsome only son. Now you will get the proper reward for your deeds!” And he ordered chains and instruments of torture for them.

45. However, they grieved no less than that father himself. Indeed, what else could their commiserating and humane souls have felt? Besides, they were ashamed. Putting their trust in the faith for which, according to the word of God, everything is possible, even the impossible,¹⁷ they decided to turn to prayer, trying humbly to mitigate the fire of the father’s anger and soften the severity of his righteous indignation. “Oh man of God,” they said, “we are not witches and we curse those who practice witchcraft with the strongest curses. We serve the true God who we know terrifies even the guardians of Hell.¹⁸ With one touch of His hand he vanquishes death and with one word He granted life to the stinking corpse of a man who’s been dead for four days.¹⁹ If you really think that we are responsible for the death of your son trust us for we are convinced that God will grant him life if we ask.” They prayed for the child and—oh miracle, oh Your eternally shining grace, Savior Christ!—they were able to present the living child back to his father.

46. And what did the father do? “Saints, servants of God, saviors of my home!” he cried out loud, being in a state of extreme excitement, and kept repeating as if in a dream, “Forgive me, venerable fathers, forgive me, for I was ignorant about you and I should have known better. I offer you all of my property, including myself; I shall be your servant! Use my belongings, do with me everything you want, as long as I can behold my son who was now born again for me.”

47. They, content with the man’s faith and hastening to continue on their way, limited his expenses to the necessities of travel and took the

¹⁶ 2 Corinth. 9:6, 10.

¹⁷ Mark 9:23; Luke 18:27; Matthew 17:20.

¹⁸ Job 38:17.

¹⁹ John 11:39, 43.

road that led to the Danube, seen off with great honor by him who was deemed worthy of such a great miracle. As they reached the banks of the Danube and saw the large and impassable river, they tied up three logs with linden bark and crossed over, protected by the heavenly powers. Fleeing the flood of heresy, by God's will they were saved by the threes. When they reached Belgrade, the most famous among the Danubian cities, they presented themselves to the *bori tarkan*²⁰ who guarded it. He wanted to know what had happened to them, and they told him everything. As soon as he heard all and realized that they were great men close to God, he decided to send the foreigners to Prince Boris, whose military commander he was, for he knew that the prince greatly desired to have such men. He gave them time to recover from the long journey and then sent them to the prince like a precious gift, informing him that these men were exactly what he²¹ coveted so much.

48. When they appeared before Boris, they were received with dignity and in the manner of men worthy of much esteem in all aspects and were asked what had happened to them. They explained everything, from the beginning to the end, without omitting anything. When he heard all this, the prince uttered many praises to God for sending him such servants of His to grace Bulgaria, and for presenting him with teachers and administrators of the faith²² who were not chance persons, but confessors and martyrs. He gave them clothing appropriate for ecclesiastics, showered honors on them, and ordered that houses be prepared for them from among those earmarked for the closest of his friends. He provided them with all necessities in abundance for he knew well that even the smallest bodily need greatly distracts from the contemplation of God. He himself was seized by a great desire to talk to them every day, to learn from them about ancient histories and the lives of the saints, and through their mouths to read the scriptures.

49. Those of his companions who were distinguished from the rest by the nobility of their families and their great wealth came to the saints like children to the houses of their teachers, inquired about everything that pertains to salvation, and drawing on such perennial springs drunk from their waters and brought them to their homes. They strove diligently before the saints, each one convincing them to visit his house,

²⁰ The Bulgarian governor.

²¹ Prince Boris.

²² 1 Col. 3:10.

considering the presence of the saints a blessing and believing that where those three were, bonded together bodily and spiritually, the Lord was among them.²³ The saints, avoiding the multitude and at the same time endeavoring to kindly please the prince, did not dare visit the homes of many, except when the God-loving prince permitted them.

50. Because of that a certain Eskhatch, a Bulgarian who had the rank of *sampsis* approached the prince and asked for permission to accept in his house the most holy Clement and the venerable Naum. The prince willingly gave his assent, for the petitioner was dear to him, but said: "Accept the teachers honorably until we have prepared for them whatever needs to be done."

51. The home of Tcheslav too, was blessed with the visit of Angelarius as the prince honored him by agreeing to his request to accept this teacher. However, Tcheslav did not enjoy his presence for long in this life. Angelarius, spending a short period of time with him, with joy yielded up his soul in the hands of the holy angels.

52. Clement and Naum lived with Eskhatch who showered them with honors, but returned the honor with even more precious gifts for, sowing spiritual seeds, they earned material goods for the man.²⁴

53. After that, because the true helper of God Michael, whom our account called earlier Boris did not cease to direct all his thoughts to how to ensure for the holy men of God full freedom to do God's work and inspired by a thought sent by God, he separated Kutmichevitsa from Kotokius, put Dometa as its governor,²⁵ and handed the blessed Clement to Dometa or, better, Dometa to Clement, or even more specifically, gave them to one another, the former obeying in everything, the latter utilizing him as a helper in his decisions. Clement was sent as teacher of Kutmichevitsa and an order was issued to all denizens of the province to welcome the saint with honor, provide him abundantly and generously with everything, present him with gifts,²⁶ and through visible things to proclaim to every one the treasury of love which is lodged in the soul.

54. To encourage others, Boris himself gave as a present to the thrice blessed Clement three houses in Devol, standing out with their opulence

²³ Matthew 18:20.

²⁴ 1 Corinth. 9:11.

²⁵ Alternative reading: "and relieved Kurt from the province." These place names in southwestern Bulgaria (modern Macedonia) are not mentioned elsewhere.

²⁶ Boris might have instituted tithes or diverted state taxes for the support of Clement.

and belonging to the family of the *comes*. Besides this, he also granted him places for recreation around Ohrid and Glavinitsa.²⁷

55. Such were the truly great deeds of the prince. In this way his marvelous soul poured out, as much as it could, his love for Christ over Christ's servant, serving as an example for others in its laudable diligence.

56. And how about the deeds of Clement? Did he get puffed up by the honors and did he feel he was something more than what he had been before? Did he give in to the good life, thinking that he achieved enough? Not at all. He made these honors the foundation of his accomplishment in teaching and diligent preaching and never ceased to work lest he disappointed the prince in the hope that the latter placed in him. He traveled all over the regions which we already mentioned, preached the divine salvation to the pagans, and explained to everyone the divine dogmas and how they would be saved through the divine commandments, and argued that just like a pious life that does not rest on a sound doctrine is actually stinking dead so dogma without [righteous] life will not lead to eternal life. He likened the first case to a blind person in command of their hands and feet and the second to a person who had eyes but their hands and feet had been cut off.

57. In each diocese he had people chosen from the rest, and not a small number, for they were up to three thousand and five hundred men. With them he spent most of his time and revealed for them the deeper passages of the scriptures.

58. As for us, the humble and the unworthy, the greatness of his goodness made us his close companions and we were always with him, attending to everything he did, spoke, or taught through the former or the latter.²⁸ We never saw him idle. He either taught the children—through different methods, showing to some the shape of the letters, explaining to others the meaning of what was written, adjusting the hands of yet others so they could write—or prayed day and night, or busied himself with reading, or wrote books. Sometimes he did more than one thing at a time, writing and instructing the children at the same time for he knew that laziness is the teacher of all evil as wisdom, the instructor of everything that is good, asserted through one of its servants.

²⁷ Devol was a settlement on the river of the same name; Glavinitsa is a common place name in the district of Ohrid.

²⁸ Here the voice of the Old Bulgarian narrator slips into Theophylactus's account.

59. This is why his pupils were the best in their way of life and their learning. Verily it was proper that those who were so well planted and so well watered would grow with God's help.²⁹ He ordained readers, sub-deacons, deacons, and priests from among them. In every district he used three hundred disciples, not to count their helpers, and none of them paid anything to the prince, but all served God, to pay Him or, rather, to repay Him. Such were the deeds that occupied Clement for seven whole years.

60. The eight year of his teaching was the last of the life of the servant of God Michael-Boris, the honored prince of Bulgaria. The princely power was inherited by Vladimir, who ruled for four years and died. Heir to everything then became his brother Simeon, the first to be proclaimed tsar of the Bulgarians. Michael gave birth to him and he was in everything his image and likeness,³⁰ inhering unaltered his [father's] character and goodness. He was fair and sincere to everyone, especially to those who displayed purity of character and a fully Christian way of life, who were fired up by warm faith and were tormented by zeal after the House of God. For that reason he completed what his father began, strengthened the divine preaching, firmly fortified Orthodoxy with the churches he built everywhere, and prepared a wide and open road for the law of God.

61. When rumors, according to which Clement was great, made him appear even greater than his reputation, like someone who really put it on his heart to ascend higher, reached even Tsar Simeon and made him admire the virtue of the teacher, the tsar called on the saint to visit him and entered into a conversation with him. After he felt the blessing of his presence, for the venerable was much esteemed even by his enemies of account of his demeanor, [the tsar] praised the land of the Bulgarians and commended his tsardom on being so much blessed by God.

62. After that, having consulted with the more prudent among those who were close to him, all of whom looked up at Clement like to a father and believing that it will be pleasing to God to honor him in this manner, he appointed him bishop of Drembitsa and Velika.³¹ This

²⁹ 1 Corinth. 3:6-7.

³⁰ Gen. 1:26.

³¹ The place names have not been identified; the area is most likely to the northeast of Ohrid.

is how Clement became the first bishop in the Bulgarian language.³² Entrusted with the bishop's work, he made the greatness of the office the foundation of his ascension to God and added many new labors to what he used to do before that.

63. Solomon says "More knowledge brings more suffering."³³ Adding honors to Clement, Simeon added new cares as well because, finding the people of that province wholly ignorant of the word of God and the scriptures and unacquainted with anything that adorns churches and leads the people in the spirit of the right order and wellbeing, he gave no rest to his eyes, no nap to his eyelids, but made the care of the people his food and his pleasure. He preached incessantly and put everything in order, correcting ignorance and setting things straight, becoming to them everything in turn, according to everyone's need.³⁴ He instructed his clergy in everything that pertained to the ecclesiastical order and the signing of psalms and prayers, so that the priests of his diocese were no worse than anyone of those famous in these deeds, and they strove more than everyone else in everything that was worthy of praise. He made people wiser and placed the firmness of their faith³⁵ on the rock of the true Christian religion for they were wholly ignorant and, generally speaking, more like beasts.

64. What else? In this wise he fed them with the Word, which is true bread and truly strengthens the hearts. But did he neglect to feed with bodily food those whom he found in need of spiritual nourishment? If that were the case he would have only in part emulated his Jesus of whom he knew that He fed the ignorant with both His teaching and bread.³⁶ That is why he was the father of orphans and the defender of widows, caring about them in every possible way. His door was opened to the poor and no stranger had to spend the night in the street.³⁷

65. He made the model of his life the great Methodius and took care to pray not to deceive himself emulating him. Placing his [Methodius'] life and deeds much like the picture of a skillful painter, he diligently strove to paint himself according to the blueprint. For he knew his life

³² Or "the first bishop of the Bulgarian people," which would mean that he was Bulgarian by origin.

³³ Eccl. 1:18.

³⁴ 1Corinth. 9:22.

³⁵ Col. 2:5.

³⁶ John 6, 16:66.

³⁷ Job 31:32.

like no one else, having accompanied him since his childhood and youth and witnessed with his own eyes the deeds of his teacher.

66. Being aware of the uncouthness of the people and their complete ignorance in grasping the scriptures and seeing that many Bulgarian priests understood Greek writings with difficulty, for they had been trained only to read and were therefore as stupid as beasts because there were not even eulogies in the Bulgarian tongue he, realizing this, found out a means against it and tore down the wall of ignorance with his travails. He composed clear and simple sermons for all feast days. There was not much that was deep and sophisticated in them, but they were accessible to the simplest Bulgarian. With these he fed the souls of the more simple Bulgarians, nourishing with milk those who could not take solid food, thus becoming new Paul for the new Corinthians, the Bulgarians.³⁸ Through these sermons can be learned the mysteries of the feasts performed for Christ and through Christ. To honor the most pure Mother of God, whose memory, as you know, is often celebrated throughout the year, Clement diligently put many praises for her and accounts of her miracles in his sermons. You will find that the Baptist was not left without praise, and you will learn about the miraculous finding of his head. You will find descriptions of the lives and travels of the prophets and the apostles. You will ascend, through the heroic deeds of the martyrs, to Him who took them to Himself on account of their blood. Do you love the deeds of the saintly fathers and do you incline toward an almost incorporeal and bloodless life? You will find that too, carefully translated into Bulgarian by the wise Clement. By the way, it is well known that all this is preserved by people who love to work. What more? He richly endowed the Church with psalms-like songs, some composed for many of the saints, other, prayers and thanks, in honor of the honorable and pure Mother of God. Generally speaking, Clement bequeathed to us Bulgarians³⁹ everything that pertains to the Church and through which God and the saints are glorified in memory and souls are deeply moved.

67. All this he left in his monastery, which he built in Ohrid while the blessed Boris was still alive and before he took over the bishopric of Velika. Noticing that the prince girded the Bulgarian lands subject to him with seven cathedral churches, as if lighting up a candelabra

³⁸ 1 Corinth. 3:2.

³⁹ Again, the Old Bulgarian text transpires here.

with seven candles, he too, desired to build in Ohrid a monastery of his own. He added to it another church, which he later made the bishop's cathedral. And so Ohrid had three churches: a cathedral one and the smaller [churches] of St Clement's, much smaller than the cathedral one, but more beautiful on account of their round and spherical shape. Through all means possible he strove to eliminate Bulgarian indifference to the divine things, to gather them, attracted to the beauty of the buildings, and especially to mitigate the cruelty, severity, and roughness of their hearts through knowledge of God. Little wonder that he endeavored to change the thoughts of the people toward meekness and humanity.

68. And because all over this country grew only wild threes and cultivated fruit there was none, he gave it that grace as well, bringing over from the country of the Greeks all kinds of cultivated threes and through grafting turned the wild threes into cultivated to teach, I believe, even in this way the human souls to imbibe the juices of goodness and offer as a gift to God the fulfillment of the divine will, the only food he considered proper for himself.⁴⁰ This is how he served their souls and endeavored to enlarge the church of God in any way possible, paying no attention to his bodily needs and counting his life for nothing as the divine apostle says,⁴¹ but was dedicated to the salvation of the multitude.⁴²

69. Is this not enough of a testimony that God loved the man who loved Him so much, who loved his heavenly Father like a son his father? Not really. For God glorified him with the grant of miracles. Listen up now, how did that happen.

70. Once, Clement was coming back from Velika to Ohrid in order to see if the people of the land kept up their spirits and leaned on the fear of God as if on a scepter, as well as to spend some time in peace and communion with God in his monastery, the beauty of which he loved and for which he longed when he was away. While he was on his way, he came across two paralyzed men, one of whom was on top of that deprived of his sight as well, this most precious thing, and this moved deeply his compassionate soul. Yet he was as compassionate as he was humble. His desire to remain in the shadow even when

⁴⁰ John 4:34.

⁴¹ Acts 20:24.

⁴² 1 Corinth. 10:33.

performing miracles was greater than the paralyzed men's wish to be cured. Therefore, he looked around and, seeing no one, lifted his eyes to heaven, raised his saintly arms for prayer⁴³ and begged the divine intervention. With the same hands he prayed he then touched the paralyzed bodies and his touch became bounding and tying up for them. And here, according to the words of Isaiah, every one of them leaped like a deer⁴⁴ even though before that they were not only lame and many parts of their bodies were broken, but they were fully immobilized like the earth on which they were laying down. The blind too, was healed: he saw the light and praised the Lord aloud. Still, it was not meet that the miracle remained hidden from human eyes. One of the servants of the saint saw everything. Later, when Clement found that out and realized that he had been a hidden witness and saw everything while hiding in his cell, he was greatly annoyed for that was not the proper thing to do, and he warned him sternly and ordered him to tell no one about what had happened for as long as Clement was a denizen of this world.

71. Weighted down by age and exhausted by labors, he decided to resign from the bishopric not because he desired to escape and desert the office in which the Holy Spirit had put him in charge as shepherd of the Church of the Lord,⁴⁵ but because of his blessed and God-inspired diligence for he was afraid lest the work of God be destroyed by his weakness.⁴⁶ He went to the tsar and told him: "Most pious tsar, for as long as my body endured the labors and cares of the Church which, I am convinced, are heavier than those of the state, I thought that if I left the Church of God with which He entrusted me Himself stretching His hand through your power, it would have been a detestable thing to do, something unworthy even of a mercenary, although it is appropriate for such men to run way and abandon the sheep when the wolf comes.⁴⁷ On what ground would I had left the flock of God when I saw no wolves around? This is why I did not abandon it till this day. But now, because you can see yourself that I am greatly oppressed by old age and my great labors have taken away from me all of my strength take care of the Church and place in the house of

⁴³ 1 Tim. 2:8.

⁴⁴ Isaiah 35:6.

⁴⁵ Acts 20:28.

⁴⁶ Romans 14:20.

⁴⁷ John 10:12.

God a younger servant who has enough bodily and spiritual strength and can shoulder the service of the Church. Fulfill this last wish of mine. Grant me that I spend the few days that have remained to me in communion with myself and God. My monastery is a good place for that. Let me die there. What more can I do in the office that needs a stronger body? If I am weak to take care of the Church, how can I claim that dignity? Paul called the bishop's office an ambition from which those who are not capable of heavy work should abstain.⁴⁸ You would not like to see the Church which flourished more than many others under my governance to whiter on my watch. But as I said, keep its beauty through others, younger and stronger, for the danger that things would go wrong because of my weakness is quite real."

72. But the tsar was shocked by this unexpected request (because when we hear without expecting it what we do not desire it terrifies us) and said: "Why are you saying this, father? How could I look at another sitting on your throne while you are still alive? How could I deprive the country from your blessings? Your resignation from the bishop's throne would be a bad portent for my own downfall from the tsar's throne. If I somehow offended Your Grace, if I sinned unknowingly—because I am not aware of having sinned—and you, sparring us as a father would, do not wish to make known my inappropriate conduct toward you and cover the true reason with excuses of frailty, pray tell, and I am ready to render account, as a son heals the grievances of his father. But if you do not accuse us in anything, why would you wish to sadden those who did not offend you? You cannot blame the clergy for not being humble and obedient, for it was you who delivered them through the Gospel and made them obedient to God and yourself, nor can you blame us for disregarding your commands, nor is there anything else among your deeds that deserves chiding. Why, then, do you make your children lament your groundless resignation? Either you obey me father or my word shall stand! Whatever you say, I will not comply with it, whatever you do, I will not back down, for resignation is only permitted to the unworthy, and you are above all worth!"

73. At these words, the old man acquiesced and without adding another word about resignation went back to his monastery, there to find out that the Heavenly Tsar was agreed with his decision. As soon as he was back, he fell ill. Anticipating his death, he made his last

⁴⁸ 1 Tim. 3:1.

present to the Bulgarian churches and added to the *Triod* what was missing, finishing the part that is sang from the new Sunday to the Pentecost. Good minds will quickly grasp what a man he had been when bodily sound by the nature of his preoccupations when weighted down by illness. Indeed, the inner man in him was renewed to the extent that the outer man faded away⁴⁹ for he could say as Paul did: “For when I am weak, then I am strong.”⁵⁰

74. What else? He drew up his will, according to the canons, including the books he wrote and the property he had or, rather, the property of God through whom he had acquired everything and who was the only one through whom he wanted to enrich himself like a merchant who looks out for fine pearls and pays little heed to their shells.⁵¹ He divided all of his property into two parts and left the first half to the bishopric and the other to his monastery, giving a clear example how to make gains and what to do with them, for both were the result of God’s will. He had properties granted to him by the faithful princes and tsars which, by the way, ought not to be alienated by being given away, especially by people simple by nature. The Lord gave us an example for that by not only not spurning the well-known woman with the perfume but taking her in and memorializing her in the Gospel.⁵² No one has given away his property in a worthier manner than the great Clement.

75. Such was his life and in such wise did he adorn the throne given to him by God. Putting an appropriate end to what he began and a roof that fitted the foundation, he migrated to God. His divine body, equal in honesty to his soul, was buried as a saint in a saintly manner, although not as it really deserved, but fully in accordance with the capabilities of those who sang over it and honored it. It was buried in the time of the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon on July 27, 6424 [916] in the monastery, in the grave that he had prepared with his own hands on the right side of the front area of the temple.

76. But I forgot to mention a strong proof of the mutual bond between the souls of the saints. Before his death some of his disciples had dreams in which Cyril and Methodius came to the venerable and foretold the end of his life.

⁴⁹ 2 Corinth. 4:16.

⁵⁰ 2 Corinth. 12:10.

⁵¹ Matthew 13:45.

⁵² Matthew 26:6–13.

77. It appears that even though he went away from us and left this life, his grace continues to be present among us and the relics of the teacher still perform good deeds, alleviating suffering and curing diseases.⁵³ What I say will be confirmed by that man whose arms and legs had been immobilized and who came to the temple when the divine service was held and was cured. Those present did not know who he was and from where did he come. Only when he commenced to give thanks for his healing and kept expressing his gratitude by stretching up his arms and by loud shouts which annoyed those who were in the temple, was he asked about the reasons for his grateful prayer. He told them everything, how he was a citizen of Ohrid himself and how for many years he had suffered from this disease. Prompted more by desperation than by the sickness he decided to go and worship the holy tomb, hoping to find consolation in Clement who could achieve everything through Christ. Dragging himself on all fours, he came to the tomb of the venerable. There he fell into a rapture and had the vision of an old man who touched his hair and ordered him to get up. At the old man's words, his body emitted a noise as if his bones were crashing against each other.⁵⁴ It appeared that his limbs were being put together and his joints were being readied for movement. When he came to he found he had been healed: his arms were sound, his legs were sound, and his body was well: "Now I raise my arms to the one who straightened them and I am standing on my feet again." These were the words of the man who had been immobilized; words of thankfulness poured out of the bottom of his heart. Those present joined him in praising the venerable with words of gratitude.

78. Why do I really need to account for all these things? Who does not know how many [people] suffering from madness and how many afflicted by other sufferings have been delivered from their misery as soon as they came close to his tomb, or even as soon as they called up his name, for as long as they had faith in him, the real and true helper. That is why it is hardly possible to describe the diligence of Bulgarians of all ages in the worship of the saint for they have tasted of his grace and hasten to bring as much gifts as they can afford.

79. Oh, divine and holy head in which the Spirit built His unshakable dwelling! Oh, light of the day and the night which not only leads us

⁵³ Matthew 10:1.

⁵⁴ Ezekiel 37:7.

but enlightens us day and night as well with the gifts of grace! Regardless whether we fight temptations and the darkness of seduction wraps around us like the cover of the night, we enjoy silence or rejoice in the light, we are deemed worthy of the gift of your grace. Oh, trumpet through which the Comforter called upon us! Oh, good shepherd who sacrificed your saintly soul for us, your sheep, and through your many labors gathered together the flock of God and led us to a lush meadow, the Scriptures explained by your tongue, fed us the quiet water of the divine baptism, and led us onto the path of truth so that we do only good deeds! Through you the entire land of Bulgaria found God. You furnished the church richly with songs and psalms and explicated the feast days through sermons. You guided the monks in the rules of the holy life through the lives of saints. You taught the priests how to live according to the canons. Oh, earthly angel and heavenly man! Oh, olive tree which is no less worthy than the one that the prophet talked about, for you created many more sons of piety!⁵⁵ Oh, leader of blind men, no matter what kind was the blindness and what kind of leadership was needed! Oh, you who prepared for God a chosen people, zealous in the good deeds which they saw you performing!⁵⁶

80. Take even greater care of your flock now that you have even more power than when you were among the living. Drive away the deadly heresy, which after your death in Christ crept like an infectious disease among your flock and now disperses and murders the sheep of the flock which you fortified, of saintly and venerable shepherd!⁵⁷ Guard us, your pupils, from the invasions of the barbarians, especially now, when grief is near and we have no assistance; when the sword of the Scythian is drenched in Bulgarian blood, when the hands of the lawless throw the corpses of your children for food of the birds of the sky!⁵⁸ Crush these hands through the right hand of God whom you serve and grant peace to your people so that we can rejoice celebrating your feast day, glorifying through you the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in the One God to whom is all glory, honor, and worship now, forever, and for all ages. Amen.

⁵⁵ Jeremiah 11:16; Hosea 14:7, Zack. 4:12–14.

⁵⁶ Tit. 2:14.

⁵⁷ The heresy is most likely Bogomilism.

⁵⁸ The “Scythians” could be Magyars, Petchenegs, or the Viking Rus of the prince of Kiev, all of whom descended upon Bulgaria during the later tenth and eleventh century.

Second Life of Naum of Ohrid, most likely late eleventh or twelfth century. 107

This *Life* of Naum, extant in a sixteenth-century copy, is the product of a late and already mature cult of the disciple-saint, strongly stressing his and the Slavic scriptures' affiliation with Bulgaria, and embellishing the account with miracles to establish the Slavic disciples' saintly reputation. It offers more detail about Naum's service in Bulgaria, vindicating the author of the first *Life*, who correctly guessed the existence of fuller records of Naum's activities, but is contaminated by later and rather inaccurate evidence as well. Its major source is Theophylactus' *Life of Clement*. Despite late attributions (Zlatarski believed it should be dated in the sixteenth century) the text is most likely the product of the period of Byzantine rule of Bulgaria. Edition: *BSM*, 312–13.

Month of December, twenty-third day, memory of our saintly and holy father Naum, great miracle-maker in the Lebanon of Devol, in the vicinity of the city of Ohrid.

This great saintly father Naum grew up in Mysia.⁵⁹ His noble parents raised him to think of wealth and nobility as weeds. Accordingly, he joined the apostles' equals Constantine the Philosopher and his brother Methodius as they traveled and instructed the Mysian and the Dalmatian peoples and went everywhere they went, even to the old Rome.

There, through God's revelation, the blessed Pope Adrian met them solemnly outside the city with his entire following of ecclesiastical and urban notables. God showed many miracles and healings and glorified his saints. After that they sang the divine mass and the pope cut off the hairs of Constantine the Philosopher, now a monk, and made him a priest.⁶⁰ Methodius he ordained as archbishop of Moravia and the whole of Panonia. After liturgy was served with the books translated from the Greek into the Slavonic language the pope showed them to everyone and the books opened and showed by themselves. The pope said: "Praised be God! These scriptures are true and proper sacrificial victim to God." Thereafter he ordained Clement, Naum, and the others for priests and deacons, and ordered that the entire evening and morning service sang according to the Bulgarian text in the great temple of the holy apostles Peter and Paul. And so it was done. They served mass together, praising God who worked such miracles. Not a long time afterwards, on the fourteenth day of February, the godly father

⁵⁹ This is the only indication that Naum was a Bulgarian for the term "Mysia" is the contemporary Byzantine term for Bulgaria.

⁶⁰ Constantine did not become a monk in Rome for he was already in the monastic estate; there he only received the "great schime," the highest step in monasticism usually taken just before dying.

Cyril died in Rome. His most laudable body was laid to rest in the temple of St Clement, a disciple of St Peter's, in Rome. God worked miracles and omens through St Cyril after his death and glorified this true servant of His.

Methodius himself overcame the grief after his natural brother Cyril and, receiving the permission of the blessed Pope Adrian, went to Panonia with all of his disciples, in the city of Moravia, where he inherited the metropolitan leadership. There he taught and arranged everything well.

After the death of Methodius a certain Latin, by the name of Vihing, became metropolitan. Filled with the Macedonian and Apollinarian heresy, he distorted the entire teaching of Methodius and after severely torturing his disciples sent them to prison in chains.⁶¹ But the saints prayed to God, and a strong earthquake broke out. After two or three tremors everyone fled to their houses, the gates of the prison swung open, and the chains fell from their hands and feet. Every one marveled at that miracle and called the saints great. However, the enemies of the Spirit attributed this to Belzebul, like the Jews did with my Christ. And they tormented them a lot and exiled them from that land.

But they, in the words of the Scripture, shook up the dust from their feet and came to the Danubian lands. There, with prayers they resurrected the son of a certain lord and illuminated his home. For that they received great honors from every one and together with many people from that village went to the great river Danube. With prayers and God's miracle they tied up three logs with clematis, invoked the name of the Holy Trinity, and crossed over to the other side, to the city of Belgrade. There Prince Radislav met them with great honors and they responded with blessings and joy.⁶² From there some went on to Mysia, others to Dalmatia and Dacia. Everywhere they multiplied a hundred times God's word.⁶³

⁶¹ Bishop Vihing was a bitter enemy of Methodius and the Slavic letters but was not a heretic; the author seeks to blacken his name as much as possible.

⁶² This is the only source that mentions the name of the Bulgarian governor of Belgrade. Theophylactus' *Life of Clement* uses only his title, *boritarkan* or *tarkan* of the northern part of the country.

⁶³ As there is no other source indicating missionary work north of the Danube during the period, the *Life* might be referring to Dacia Ripensis, which encompassed territories south of the river, in modern Serbia and northwestern Bulgaria. I would like to thank Tsvetelin Stepanov for this identification.

Naum and Clement themselves came to the provinces of Ohrid and Lihnida. In the delta of Devol, at the shores of the lake by the city of Ohrid, between the rivers, Naum built a great monastery and a temple dedicated to the leader of the ranks, the Archangel Michael, and all heavenly powers, with the sponsorship and upon the orders of the pious tsar of Bulgaria Michael-Boris and his son, Tsar Simeon, in the year of the creation of the world 6413 [905]. After having arranged everything according to God's will, the blessed Naum, now very old, died there and yielded up his soul in the hands of God on December 23. His honorable body was dressed up by the divine hands of the cleric of Christ Clement of Ohrid, and was solemnly laid to rest in the grave in the right wing of the temple. God glorified him with great miracles: he treated all kinds of deceases and wounds and exorcized demons.

Folk Life of St John of Rila, *twelfth century*.

John of Rila (876–946) is the most prominent Bulgarian saint in the monastic tradition. A commoner born soon after the conversion to Christianity, he first joined one of the earliest Byzantine coenobitic communities in the country and then adopted the rigorous life of solitary hermit, the dominant Byzantine practice of holy men. His fame spread and even the ruler, Tsar Peter (927–969), sought an interview with him. Avoiding royal patronage and entanglement with secular institutions John's feats attracted followers and a community gathered around him. By 930 it has grown into a new foundation, soon to become the largest and most influential in the country. John ended his life in 946 and was canonized soon thereafter. No contemporary *Life* is extant, but the two twelfth-century *Lives* preserved now, the so-called *Folk Life* and a Greek *Life* written by George Skylitzes, a Byzantine official in Sredets (Sofia), convey traces of earlier written tradition. This version of the *Life* was written when the cult of the saint was already established, but before his relics were carried away to Hungary in 1183. The anonymous author possessed neither the sophistication of the tenth-century masters nor the skill and agenda of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century literati, but his account is vivid and deeply moving. By the beginning of the thirteenth century at least two other, short (*Prologue*) *Lives* were composed to mark the *translatio* of his relics to Tarnov, the capital of the newly restored Bulgarian state, and to extol the ruling Asenid dynasty. In the fourteenth century Patriarch Euthymius composed a new *Life* as part of his reformation of the Bulgarian letters. Edition: Jordan Ivanov, "Zhitija na sv. Ivana Rilski," *Godišnik na Sofijskija Universitet. Istoriko-Filologičeski Fakultet* 32 (Sofia, 1936), 28–37.

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Once upon a time, there was a devout, pious, and Christ-loving man. He feared God and served Him with trepidation. He constantly poured out tears, recalling the prophetic words that came out of David's mouth: "Every night I bathe my bed with tears and drown my mattress with

them.” And because his desire was so strong he resolved to leave the world.

He was a shepherd and owned nothing but a brother and an ox. And when he decided to go to the desert, he took the ox and set off. No one knew where he did go after he left his place. But then the devil, who hates the good, entered his brother’s heart and [he] convinced the people [to find him]. They caught up with him in the field called Murdishta, under the great oak. At the instigation of the devil they began to press him to leave the path of the Lord. As soon as they commenced, he offered a great prayer to God on their behalf. He barely succeeded in persuading them to let him keep the ox’s bell, in remembrance and as a sign of this world, so that it was known what father John did take with himself of the world. The ox they took away. With his saintly hands the holy father tied it up under the oak called “The Great Oak.” To this very day the trace of the rope is visible, a miracle of the holy father.

And so he turned his holy face away from them and set off for the desert of Rila. Turning back to them, he neither blessed nor cursed them, but said, as an omen: “I am leaving laughing at you and ridiculing you.” And he turned to the desert of Rila and got to the place that was called Golets. There he stayed seven months. His brother missed him, however, and set off to seek him, and went and found him in that place. As the holy father saw him coming in such a sad state, he prayed to God and said: “Father in Heaven, guardian of all, beginning of all, divinity impossible to depict, unique-born Son of God Jesus Christ, who took the flesh on our behalf and gave us [your] image! Consoler of the soul, who comes to us from God! Meek consoler, be with me everywhere and do not disregard the tears [offered] by me, who pray to you all the time! Lord Jesus Christ, Tsar of Heaven and earth, even though I am not worthy of saying this, but as I hope in Your great mercy, for it was You who told us “Seek and you will find, ask and it will be given to you, knock and it will be opened to you,” I dare to speak these words. I have no one else to comfort me and speak to me, neither father nor mother. You are my protector, You are my Creator, You are my consoler, You are my patron, You are my master, You are my faith, You are my strength, You are my sorrow, You are my smile, You are my nurturer, You are my helper. You created everything, visible and invisible, evident and hidden. You are my Father and to You, Lord I, the sinner, pray. I have no one to assist me and I look only to You, the One God. I praise only You and in You only I find consola-

tion. I am all by myself in this desert and I have nothing with me but this stick.”

Then a voice came from Heaven and spoke to him: “Rejoice, oh light of mine in this snowy desert! Rejoice, my shining morning star! Rejoice, my bright sun in the desert of Rila! Rejoice you denizen of the desert, who are an angel in the flesh! Stand up, take your stick, and go in the place that has been prepared for you, in the cave under the mountain.” He went, found the cave, and got inside. There was no sunshine in it, nor did the wind enter it. Only an angel used to come to him constantly and bring him manna. He kept praying to God, and his tears did not cease.

The devil of temptation used to come and speak to him with angelic words. He wanted to lead him out of that place, but was not able to do anything to him. With him was the son of the holy father’s brother. The devil, an evil seducer, went to the brother of the holy father, and slandered him, saying: “I found your brother and your child in the desert, where the sun does not shine and the wind does not blow, but where beast only live. Your child will be eaten by them.” Hearing the diabolic words, the saint’s brother was seized by anger and, at the devil’s instigation, full with wrath, set off to lead him away from the desert. But because he did not know which way to go, the devil of temptation told him: “I will take you to the place where your brother resides, but your child has already been eaten by the beasts.” Having heard this, the brother of the saint was seized with grief for his child and said to the devil: “Comrade, take me to that place. I will do everything you want.” The devil took the lead and the two of them arrived at the place where the holy father, the denizen of the desert, John dwelt.

As he saw him, the holy father prayed to God, speaking thus: “God Almighty, unconquerable power, help in trouble and war, humane shepherd, merciful Father, hope of the hopeless, support of those who beg for help, fellow of the brave, comforter in misfortune, listen to me, Lord, and have mercy on me. Deliver me of the confident enemy, save me from the tribulation that afflicts me, show me your mercy and grant me salvation along with all those who please you. Yes, Lord, do not leave me now so that the enemy triumphs!” This is how he prayed as his brother, inspired by the devil, came to him and told him the words of the devil. He wanted to deceive the saint, to make him depart from the path of God and separate him from the angelic image.

As he realized that these were not his brother’s words, but the words of the deceiving devil, who does not love good but evil, the holy father

John looked up to Heaven and said: “Lord Jesus Christ do not push me away from your face and do not desert me in the day of my sorrow, but deliver me from my enemy as you delivered Daniel from the mouth of the lions, Tekla from the fire, and Ananuius, Azarius, and Misail from the burning furnace. Lord, save me from the hated one, so that I live through this short and transient life, and direct me to Your haven, as you directed Israel who fled through the sea as if over dry land, and the sea drowned his enemies. Lord, have mercy on me now. Cast down the evildoer who stands before me and put to shame this enemy of mine who wrestles with me. Lord, You know human vanity, be my helper and kill those who come uninvited and want to attack me, and know not Your commandments! Turn them into accomplices of Hell and the worms, and throw them in the eternal fire and the outer torment, where the worm never sleeps and the fire is never put out. And to your servant, Lord, give strength, rest, and help, so that he can follow in Your footsteps and serve you through the ages. Amen!”

Having heard that the holy father John said “Amen” the devil got scared and fled the place, and the brother of the saint was left behind. He realized the power of the holy father and did not dare to utter a word. He remained by himself. The devil, who urged him to evil words for he wanted to him to depart from the path of God, fled. His brother came closer, and with many entreats and a great many tears wanted him to release the child. The saint let the child go and he went with his father. He was a devout child. And because the denizen of the desert John knew that the child was devout, he prayed to God and said: “Lord, do not let the soul of the righteous [child] to perish; do not write him off with the sinners!” God heard the supplication of the saintly and holy father John, and promptly ordered a snake, and it bit the child as it went down the road with his father. The father turned back and told the holy father John. As the saintly father heard [what happened to] the child, he praised God and said: “Lord, accept the soul of the righteous child! Let him rest with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!” In that same moment the child’s soul left him and his father took him and carried him away. The holy father John ordered him to carry the child to the place called Osenovo. His father buried him there and went on his way. On account of this righteous soul the holy father John visited this place and turned it into a resting place. The snake he turned into a stone, so that the power of saint John’s prayer was known. The people who visit that place take from it to as a cure for everything.

The holy father John made the cave his dwelling and did not go out for three years and six months. Then he went out and found a rock, forty *sazhens* high and as wide as a large shield. He climbed on that rock and remained there seven years and four months, never resting, either during the day or during the night. He beat his chest, fell on his knees, drowned himself with tears, fasted and kept vigils, tortured his body with colds and tempests, subjected himself to heat and hail, fasted and kept vigils day and night. All his accomplishments and torments were reported by the angel to God in Heaven. God learned about his patience, and the Lord's angel came to bring him manna.

Realizing that God listened to his prayer, the ancestral enemy got very angry. He gathered a multitude around himself and called a council. They came to the place where the holy father John stood on the rock, praying to God. They came unexpectedly, with great furor, planning to scare the saint out of that place. But they were not able to do anything to him, for the angel of the Lord guarded him and encouraged him. The devil turned to flight, and the holy father John kept standing on the rock, praying to God day and night and shedding tears incessantly. The devils that came dragged him down from the rock, which was forty *sazhens* high, yet he did not wish to go anywhere else, and ascended the narrow path that led to that place back again, going up the same way they had pushed him down. High and steep was the rock from which they pushed down and tortured the saint, but he took everything with joy. To this very day his footsteps and his blood can be seen on the rock.

However, he got saddened, looked up to Heaven, and said: "God Almighty, do not desert me and be my help against these devils! Save me and help me a little to go through this tribulation. Do not recall the sins I have committed by word or deed or thought, willingly or unwillingly! Like the merciful God you are, help me, so that the offender against the law cannot say: Where is his God? Lord, take care and deliver me from this enemy, so that Your name is praised for all ages!" The moment the holy father John said: "Amen," in the same hour, the angel stroke the stone like a clapping board and the bell rang over the tomb of the saint. The desert shook and trembled like a lake, and the forests echoed like a bell. And as soon as he heard the "amen," the clapping board, and the bell, the devil fled to the place prepared for him, where there is no light, and darkness lasts forever.

In the same hour an angel came from Heaven, speaking for God: "Oh beloved one, be manly and courageous! I am always with you. Do

not be afraid but rejoice, compatriot of my Prophet, the Precursor and Baptist! Because he was nurtured in the desert and you fell in love with the desert. He was born of a barren one, and you of a fruit. Rejoice, oh bright daylight of mine, in this desolate forest! Rejoice, oh you bright sunshine in the desert of Rila! Rejoice you too, forests, who welcomed the light of the desert! Triumph, oh you people on earth, who bow to the relics of the desert dweller John! Rejoice you too, desert, who accepted your light and my interlocutor, the one equal to the angels, the earthly angel and heavenly human!"

Then John the Theologian came to him, embraced him in the manner a mother embraces her youngster, kissed him, and told him: "Rejoice, beloved of God, for the wreath of glory has already been prepared for you and the news of you has spread about! Stand up, take your stick, go to the place where you formerly adopted the monastic image, and there leave your stick, so that it can serve as a sign to the world and in your memory, for this is what God ordained." The desert dweller John got up, went to the place where he first took up monasticism, under the Ruen mountain in the locale called Scrino, and then left. No one saw him coming and going. In fulfillment of God's command he left there his stick, as an sign to the world and for his remembrance.

Then he set out for Perig. He found, in the vicinity of the river called Struma, a rocky place, and there he made a resting place for himself. From there, he went to the mountain of Vitoshka, and made a resting place there as well. An angel of God came to him and told him: "Rejoice, oh servant of God and companion of the angels! Accomplish what has been commanded to you! Stand up, leave the place and go the place prepared for you in the desert of Rila!" Accordingly, he went to the place where he had prepared, with his holy hands, his own tomb, in the desert of Rila.

At that time, as the rumor about the saint spread, Tsar Peter happened to be in Sredets. The tsar heard about him, selected nine men, all skillful hunters, and commanded them to go in the mountain of Rila to hunt, telling them: "Do not come back to me until you find the place of the holy father, so that I can go there myself and bow down to him." The men went hunting as they were ordered. They sought the place of the saint, but were not able to find it. Many days did they spend in the mountain and neither caught any game nor found out where the place of the saint was. They were saddened, and could not go back to the tsar, for they accomplished none of the tasks entrusted to them. On top of it, they went hungry for many days. They spoke

aloud the name of the saint and prayed, saying: “Saintly Father, reveal yourself to us, so that we do not perish [on the order] of the tsar!” He took mercy on them, for the holy father knew of the tsar’s decision and thoughts. The same hour they found a narrow path. They praised God, followed the path, and found him. The holy father beheld them and asked: “Children, why have you come? Have you really not eaten anything?” He perceived that they had not eaten for five days, and they confessed the entire truth to him. In that same moment an angel from heaven had brought food for the saint in the form of rosehip fruits. By God’s command these were transformed into the food of the communion. He offered them to partake of the food. However, there was a man among them who was used to eat a lot. As he saw the tiny wafer, he thought in his heart and said to himself: “What is this miniature wafer to us, nine men?” The holy father John perceived his thought, sighed, and said in his heart to God: “Lord, as you sated five thousand people with five loaves, work Your miracle here and bless this table.” And they all ate their fill and still half of the wafer remained. One of them was sick but after he ate he immediately got better, as the Scripture says: “The man ate angelic bread.”

After that the men praised God and left. Rejoicing, they went back to the tsar and told him everything they saw at the saint’s. Tsar Peter listened to them and praised God. He took along many people and his soldiers and set off to meet the holy father. As he reached to the river called Rila, they told him: “Do you see where this river gushes out? There is the holy father and his place.” He went up the river and reached the rock called Stog, but could not cross over, for it was steep and narrow. Then they went up the mountain called Knishava, and from there pointed out to him the forest and the rock where the holy father dwelt. The tsar wished to go, but was not able to, because of the desert. He promptly sent out two youngsters and told them: “When you get there tell the holy father: Father, I have come to behold your holy face, if possible.” The holy father replied to them, saying: “Go and tell him: Saintly and glorious tsar, what is not possible for man is possible for God. If you wish that you see me and I see you, pitch your tent on the peak, and I will make smoke. You will see the smoke, and I will see the tent, because it has been commanded that in this way we see each other.” The holy father made smoke [that went up] like a column in the sky. Tsar Peter saw the sign of the holy father, and the holy father looked up to the tent. Both praised God and bowed to each other. Then Tsar Peter filled a cup with gold and sent it to him,

saying: "Accept this from my Majesty and use it as you wish." The holy father John took the cup but sent back the gold telling the youngsters sent by the tsar: "Go and say this to the tsar: Your brother says: My brother, man does not live on bread only, but on God's word as well, as it is written in the Gospels. I, brother, have no troops to arm, and no goods to buy. Keep your gold, for you really need it. I will keep the cup as a souvenir from you and a sign of the world." And he sent back the gold, keeping the cup, and said to the youngsters: Tell this to the tsar: Leave this place at once, for it is dangerous, lest you and those with you perish!" As soon as he heard the words of the saint, the tsar left the place. From that time and even until today that place is called "The Tsar's Peak."

Then John the Theologian came and spoke to the holy father John, saying: "I am sent by God to bring you joy. Rejoice, oh beloved servant of the Lord, your wreath is ready!" Presently a white bee alighted in his mouth. At the same moment he felt spiritually airborne and soared like an eagle and like a dove... [lacuna] over the forests. Having seen that, John the Theologian left him, and the blessed desert dweller John passed away in that place of his, prepared for him by the Lord, on the eighteenth day of August. His body lay there, and no one knew. Only an angel of the Lord served him.

After many days had passed, Tsar Peter again sent [people] to find out about the holy father. They sought him again, but were not able to find him. They went back to the tsar, saying: "We did not find him." The tsar took pity on them, praised God, and said: "Verily, I was not worthy of seeing the saint."

Long time after that, the tsar one more time sent hunters to the holy place to catch [game]. No human soul dwelled in that desert, only beasts. They used to come to the grave of the saint to cure their infirmities. The blind were able to see again and the lame became whole at the grave of the saint. The hunters found the tracks, followed them, and reached to the place of the saint and the beasts about it. The latter did not leave the saint because they wished his mercy. The hunters rejoiced that they will catch game, but the beasts spotted human faces and took fright. The bell rang and the clapping board sounded. The hunters were greatly terrified and thought about fleeing, but then they noticed the burning lamp, came near, and beheld the body of the saint. They praised God, gave up the hunt, and went back to the tsar to inform him about the saint and what they had seen.

As he heard that, the tsar rejoiced on the saint's behalf. As he lay sleeping, an angel of the Lord appeared to him [and commanded him] to request the body of the holy father, because it was ordained that it should be in the city of Sredets. People gathered to go and bring over the body of the holy father. They went [there], but were not able to lift the body of the saint. Greatly distressed, they prayed to God. Then a voice from Heaven descended upon the saint and told him: "Beloved of mine, do as you have been commanded!" Immediately the body of the saint became airborne, and the people cried aloud: "Lord have mercy!" They went where they wished and the body of the saint followed them, on God's command. Thus the body of the saint arrived in the city of Sredets. They made a coffin for it, build a temple for him, and laid down the holy body of the saintly father John, dweller of the desert of Rila. The sick who come to him are healed.

Such are the miracles that the glorious saintly father and denizen of the desert John worked out with the grace that our Lord Jesus Christ granted him. Be a helper to us as well, who listen, read, and write so that we are granted mercy and forgiveness of our sins on Judgment Day by the grace and love of humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom glory, honor, and reverence, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, for ever, and for all ages. Amen!

Short (*Prologue*) Life of St Gabriel of Lesnovo, *twelfth century*.

109

St Gabriel was a hermit in the tradition of St John of Rila, hailing from the mountainous regions of southwestern Bulgaria. If the hagiographic trope does not deceive, he was born to a noble family some time in the later eleventh century. His decision to leave the world squares well with the great religious awakening that was reverberating through Christian Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The information about Gabriel is limited. Popular tradition and his later *Life* identify the village of Osiche, district Kriva Palanka (modern Serbia), as his birthplace. If the later *Life* is correct he might have been the first serious donor of the monastery of Lesnovo. After a long sojourn in his favorite foundation, some time before the end of the fourteenth century his relics were moved to Tarnov. His feast day is January 15. The *Short Life* is extant in one manuscript, copied in the monastery of Lesnovo by the clerk Stanislav in 1330. Edition: *BSM*, 395.

On this day [January 15] is the memory of our blessed father, the desert dweller Gabriel of Lesnovo.

This blessed father of ours was the son of noble and wealthy parents. He was put to study the books and with God's blessing he succeeded well in this. When he reached the age of adulthood, he was betrothed

to a spouse of good birth, even though he did not desire that. It was the will of God that his spouse died. As he did not wish to remarry, he went to a monastery and became a monk. He took great wealth with himself and set off.

[Following] the revelation of the great *archstrategos* Michael, he went up to the mountain of Lesnovo, built a temple in the name of the *archstrategos*, installed an abbot, gathered monks, and left there all of his property. Then he withdrew in the mountain spending his time without any sleep, in silence, vigils, and prayers, and suffered many torments from the demons. After thirty years he came back to the monastery and died there. His body was buried in the ground for another thirty years. Then a noble Russian arrived in the city of Sredets, came, took him, made a coffin, and placed in it his relics, which worked many miracles. The blind saw, the lame walked again, and those possessed by evil spirits received good health at the touch of the saintly relics. A long time after that his relics were transported to the Bulgarian city of Tarnov and placed in Trapezitsa, in the church of the Holy Apostles, where they still lay and cure [the people] to this very day.

110 Folk Life of St Gabriel of Lesnovo.

The text of the *Folk Life*, as extant, is based on a now lost late-medieval (possibly fifteenth-century) version, from which a single copy survives, made some time in the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries. The texts preserving the *Life* today are all nineteenth-century copies from that master version. In composition and style it breaks free from the stricter requirements of the *Short Life* and other canonical saints' *Lives* and draws freely on the oral tradition of the saint. The environment in which it developed is similar to the context of St John's and St Joachim of Osogovo's *Lives*, the period of Byzantine rule over the Bulgarian lands. Edition: *BSM*, 396–400.

The venerable Gabriel hailed from the region of Osechko Polije.⁶⁴ His parents were quite rich and pious. His father was close with the tsar's advisors. He did not have a child however, and used to shed tears day and night, praying to God on his knees. It this he was like Euphymian who pleased God with his meek heart.⁶⁵ God grants much to those who pray, acknowledging their merit: a child was born to him. Their joy was indescribable. They baptized the baby and he grew in the Holy

⁶⁴ I.e., the region around the village of Osiche.

⁶⁵ Euphymian was the father of Alexios the man of God whose translated *Life* entered the South Slavic and Balkan traditions very early and enjoyed great popularity.

Spirit. When he became old enough to learn to read and write, his parents put him to study the books. In a short time he mastered all of the scriptures and not just in one language but in many; he did not let the Gospels out of his hands. When he got old enough to marry his parents betrothed him to a girl of a good, [indeed] royal, family. The saint, however, did not want her and stretched his arms up [wishing] to preserve his virginity. Oh, prayer, force, and victory over the passions! Archangel Michael was sent and took away the soul of his spouse.

The saint begged his parents to let him go: he was as hard as diamond, like Alexius the man of God. His parents let him go in peace. The blessed one set off on his way and came across a deacon called Thomas. The two of them greeted one another with a brotherly salute, sat down by the road for a long discussion and dozed off a bit. An angel of God appeared in the dream of the saint and told him: “Get up and go to Osiche Polije, to the place I will show you. Build there a temple dedicated to the birth of the most holy Mother of God.” The saint woke up and speedily went to tell his parents. His parents gave him much wealth for anything he would need. He built a well adorned temple at that place.

Then the venerable went to the monastery of Lesnovo to worship.⁶⁶ The abbot welcomed him and said: “What is the reason for your arrival my child?” He told the abbot about everything in detail. The abbot admitted him and for many days tried to seduce him with many temptations. [Finally] he noted his humility and patience and his great diligence in prayer, and cut his hair in the angelic image.⁶⁷

A short time thereafter the venerable kneeled down with a request and the abbot gave his blessing for his settling in a cell in the vicinity of the monastery, in the river gorge against Zletovo.⁶⁸ The abbot let him go in peace and the venerable crossed the gorge and remained there many days without sleep, shedding tears day and night, and praying diligently to God. Like Abel, he offered his sacrifice to the Lord.

The laymen who came to the saint were cured of many afflictions and obtained deliverance from evil spirits and other troubles. Many kept coming to him for cure. Because of his fame the venerable left the cell

⁶⁶ The note is either anachronistic, for the monastery of Lesnovo was founded by Gabriel himself or it is correct and Gabriel only renewed, enlarged, and endowed an already existing foundation.

⁶⁷ I.e., made him a monk.

⁶⁸ Zletovo is about 7 km (5 miles) from Lesnovo.

and moved to a small thicket in the district of Lukovo, where he spent some time. No one knew about the place. However, one day it happened that a certain shepherd who grazed his goats saw the venerable as he prayed. The shepherd came running to him, kneeled down before the saint and asked for his blessing. The saint told him: "Bless you!" The shepherd got on his feet and said: "Holy father, because of my sins all of my goats were killed by a decease called burning fever [*ognemisa*]. I beg you in the name of God, pray over them!" The saint told him: "Do not worry my child: God will turn your grief into joy." There was a dugout rock in that place full with water: the rain had filled it with twelve measures of water. The saint stepped closer to the rock, bent his knees, lifted his eyes and arms up to Heaven and prayed to God. Then he made the sign of the cross over the water, poured some of it out, gave it to the shepherd, and said: "My son, take this and sprinkle the goats." The shepherd took of the water, sprinkled the goats and was blessed with many healthy goats. The shepherd thanked the saint.

The venerable came out of the thicket and went to a distant and impenetrable mountain, to a peak by the name Oblov, called in Greek "Strongilo."⁶⁹ There he stayed for many years, and spent a long time without sleep, in fast and silence. He suffered much pain and grief from the envy of the demons but always drove them away with prayer. Resisting them like a precious and hard diamond he lived there a long time, thirty years, and then moved over to eternal life. None of the brothers knew about the small cave where the relics of the saint rested. Seized by terror, after much thought they decided that he had gone to another distant place.

A short time after that the venerable appeared to a monk in the city of Sredets called Joseph, a Russian by origin. He was humble and abstained from all lay things, refreshed himself with fast and prayer, and pleased God. He thought in himself whether the apparition might have been a deception. The following night the saint again appeared and said to Joseph: "Listen to me: go to Oblov Peak. There you will find relics which have to be transported to the monastery of Lesnovo." The monk was terrified and did not reveal what he had seen that night. Again, the saint appeared and told him: "I told you what God commanded!" As soon as the monk woke up, he rushed to the metropolitan to tell him about his vision. The metropolitan inquired with the citizens and the

⁶⁹ The peak above the village of Lukovo.

folks from the nearby villages: “Is there in our diocese Oblov Peak?” They said: “There is no such place in our diocese.” The metropolitan wrote to the other bishops [to find out] where and in what diocese and country there was a peak called Oblov. The missive got to the bishop of Zletovo. The bishop saw it and inquired about the place. They showed it to him. The bishop wrote [to the metropolitan of Sredets]: “Oblov Peak is in our diocese.” The metropolitan was informed. He took with himself Joseph, other priests, presbyters, and princes [*knjazi*, i.e., the local nobility]. They came to Lesnovo and kept vigils there. On the following day the metropolitan took along the bishop, Joseph, the abbot of the monastery, and other priests, and went to the Oblov mountain. That night the saint again appeared to Joseph and told him: “I am close to you, on the left side.” Joseph woke up immediately and began praying. At dawn, Joseph went to the said place and found the relics of the saint. He bowed to the relics together with the metropolitan, the bishop, the abbot, the priests, the monks, and the princes. Oh great glory and joy! A sweet fragrance like from a rose or an aromatic lily spread around!

When the relics were transported to the monastery of Lesnovo, many [people] were cured from various afflictions. The relics of the saint resided in that foundation for a long time and granted to the lepers who came with faith immediate cure and deliverance from unclean spirits.

In the town of Kratovo there was a very rich Armenian. He had no children but a daughter and her right arm had dried out. She came to the monastery and bowed down to the holy relics. Immediately, the saint cured the girl’s arm. In the same manner he drove away the unclean spirits afflicting another *bolijarin*’s child.

Some time later the country and the district came under the rule of the Bulgarian prince Michael the Great.⁷⁰ He governed well the domain under his power. However, out of envy the enemy stirred up against him a certain [man], Hellene [pagan] by origin, very rich and very powerful, by the name of Mavragan. He began a war against Michael and conquered his domain. But Michael put himself together, gathered a large army, took the field against the pagan, and engaged him in battle. Mavragan emerged victorious and Michael fled to the

⁷⁰ The identity of Michael is a mystery. Most likely he was a local Bulgarian noble landowner who organized and led the population in the repulsion of Petcheneg and Coumanian incursions.

region called Ratkovitsa. He found there a spring and stopped to rest with his soldiers. He cried bitterly and prayed to God: “Because of my sins the pagan routed us!” Then he lifted his arms up and gave thanks: “Help me, venerable Gabriel! I sinned much against you, unlike your parents who served you well. I, however, deserted you, and saw myself in trouble!” He prayed and fell asleep. The saint appeared in his sleep and told him: “Michael, get up right away and go to Zletovo in the night. Take with yourself two soldiers with spears, go to Rataitsa and kill Mavragan. Have no fear, I am with you!” Michael woke up, gave orders to his soldiers and went to Zletovo with two of them. They were armed with nothing but a spear. It was the sixth hour of the night. They entered Mavragan’s palace and—oh miracle!—even though the place swarmed with troops and guards, with God’s help no one saw them. It was like when the Pharaoh drowned: they had eyes but they could not see! They pushed the door of his bedroom and it opened. Michael and his two soldiers got in. Michael raised the spear, but was seized by fear: suddenly, the venerable appeared behind him, grabbed the prince’s hand, and stabbed Mavragan. The soldiers followed suit. They left immediately and by daylight were back among their comrades. Michael collected his troops, attacked the palaces, burned them down with fire, dispersed the pagan soldiers, and annihilated them in the way chosen wheat is cleaned of thorns.⁷¹ Everything went quiet. After this Prince Michael came to the saint many times, bowed down to him, and gave him much property. He died in God.

Then power went to John Oliver, [a man] with a very handsome face and not only face but soul as well, a great master of the letters not solely in one language but in many. He was the foremost advisor and man of letters in the court of the Serbian Tsar Stephen the Strong [Dushan].⁷² He very much loved and cherished the venerable father Gabriel. The monastery’s church was a small one. With the prayers of the *archstrategos* of the heavenly forces and the venerable father, Ioan built a wide and tall church and with the prayer of the saint adorned it with magnificence. It became like a river gushing forth cures. And all was quiet for many years.

⁷¹ The encounter must have taken place in the vicinity of Kratovo.

⁷² Despot Ioan Oliver, one of Stephen Dushan’s (1331–1355) chief vassals, had a vast domain centered on the region of Zletovo and in the 1340s was a generous benefactor of the monastery of Lesnovo.

Because of the envy of the enemy a certain Turkish Tsar, Amurat of Sham, went to war against the Serbs with three hundred thousand soldiers.⁷³ When the Bulgarian patriarch of Tarnov found out he feared that the monastery would be burned down. He came, took the relics of the venerable, transported them to Trapezitsa, and laid them in the church “Holy Apostles” where they lie to this very day and cures stream out from them.⁷⁴ To him glory for all ages, amen!

Short (*Prologue*) Life of St Prohor Pshinski, *thirteenth century*.

111

St Prohor was an eleventh-century hermit and monk in the tradition of John of Rila and Gabriel of Lesново. He too, hailed from southwestern Bulgaria, the scion of a well-to-do and perhaps noble family. His cult remained local. He is mentioned for the first time in the *Orbel Triod*, a thirteenth-century Bulgarian ecclesiastical collection. His *Short Life* is extant in one thirteenth-century manuscript. Edition: Klimentina Ivanova, “Dve novi prolozhni zhitija na Ivan Rilski i Prohor Pshinski,” *Starobalgarska Literatura*, 4 (1980).

On the same day [September 14—KP], the blessed father Prohor.

He was from the archdiocese of Vranja. Leaving the homeland of the archdiocese he went out and settled in the mountain called Kozjak. Many tribulations did he suffer from the evil spirits. In this way, thanking God, he yielded up his soul to God.

When the pious Christians heard about his passing away, they came and took his relics. [They] built a church in his name by the river called Pshina and placed in it the relics of the saint, which heal [people] to this very day.

Folk Life of St Prohor Pshinski, *thirteenth century*.

112

This more detailed *Life* of the saint dates from the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century. It is similar to the tradition of the *Life* of St John of Rila, but is only preserved in three eighteenth-century modern Bulgarian renditions of the medieval version. The *Life* incorporates popular legends about the future Emperor Roman Diogenes (1068–1071), then governor of the region with residence in Sredets (Sofia). Edition: *BSM*, 401–4.

Month of September, 14th day. Memory of our blessed and God-carrying father and desert-dweller Prohor, born of pious parents hailing from the villages of Ovche Polje.

⁷³ Murad I (1360–1389).

⁷⁴ The relics had been transported before Murad’s time, since the short *Life* of 1330 (see the previous entry) already mentions them as being in Tarnov.

His father's name was Ioan, and his mother's, Anna. They did not have a child and prayed incessantly to God to grant them a child, male or female. They were noble parents, feared God, gave alms, and [gave away of] their property to the poor. God saw their wish and fulfilled it, granting them a male child. Rejoicing mightily they baptized it, and gave it the name granted from God, Prohor. Indeed, this Prohor was a light of the world, true abstainer and true prophet with the gift of prophecy, and a true martyr who lived on a rock. What tongue can account for his labors as a man of this earth and as an angel of heaven? In the mountain he bore the torture of the cold of winter and the sunny heat of summer. Such was the saintly child with whom God presented his parents. He shone with virtue like a star traversing from east to west; verily, this holy father Prohor Pshinski, a desert-dweller illuminated by grace, was like another Samuel.

When he reached adulthood his parents, father and mother, began bothering him and talking about marriage. "My son: let us find a virgin for you so that there is an heir to our estate." The saint wondered what to do. Then the saint went to the church of God and prayed to God to show him the road to salvation. After a while, he read in the Holy Gospel what Christ spoke: "Whoever loves his father and mother more than me is not worthy of me; whoever loves wife and children is not worthy; the one who takes his cross and walks after me will be filled with grace and will inherit the eternal life." And so the saint prayed to God and cried out his soul so that God directed him onto the road of salvation.

And as soon as he stepped out of the church, he took to the road, striving for the mountain like deer for a spring. Such was St Prohor in the desert. In the mountain he came close to a small gully, and found a cave and a tiny spring. The saint settled there as if in a tsar's palace. His food was cabbage and grass roots, and he ate once a week. Who can account for his pains and tears and accomplishments and downfalls in the cold of winter and the heat of summer? He remained in that place for thirty two years and did not see a single human being but lived with the beasts.

Inspired by God, once the saint stood in front of his cave and a doe, panting heavily, came to him. He caressed the animal with his hand and said: "Child, what troubles you?" The hunter Diogenes, who was chasing the beast, came close to the cave and saw the old man and the beast lying at his feet. This frightened Diogenes. Ashamed by the old man, he turned back to leave in haste. But the old man called him by

name, saying: “Diogenes, do not flee. Come back, for I am a human being.” Terrified to hear that the old man knew his name, Diogenes came back, fell at his feet, and asked for his blessing. The saint blessed him and said: “Diogenes, it is foretold that you will go to Constantinople and you will become tsar. When you take over the throne and have the gift prophesied for you, do not forget me.” Diogenes left the saint, marveling in himself, and [presently] forgot the old man and what he had told him. The beast, getting up on its feet, crossed the stream. The old man saw it, left the gully, set off for the inner desert, and after much wandering found a narrow cave. There the saint settled. He blessed and prophesied, and said: “God bless this place!... [lacuna].”

One day, as the saint was praying to God in his cave, devils attacked the cave and hurled themselves onto him. He made the sign of the cross and they disappeared. Shortly afterwards, the devil transformed itself in the image of the beast called lion and came to him. The saint was startled, but all of a sudden an angel appeared in the cave of the saint and the devil turned invisible. The saint saw the angel and thanked God who sent His angel to help him.

Again the saint appeared to Diogenes and told him: “Go to Constantinople and become tsar! And do not forget me!” Diogenes promptly set off for Constantinople. As he arrived there, he saw many people gathered to install a tsar, and hid in a place... [lacuna]. In a dream, St Prohor revealed to the patriarch, who ranked highly⁷⁵ that Diogenes should be the new tsar. The patriarch sought him but did not find him. The die fell on Diogenes, but the people said: “We do not want this one for tsar.” They cast the die a second and a third time, and each time it fell on him. And so it happened that they put him on the tsar’s throne. However, when he became a tsar, Diogenes took off his shirt, hung it in an inner room, and forgot about the saint.

The saint spent thirty years in his place then foresaw, through the Holy Spirit, the hour of his death. He crossed and noticed that many angels entered his cave. Then he prayed much on behalf of the world and the orthodox tsars and died on the fourteenth day of the month of October. His body rested on the ground unspoiled. Then the saint appeared to Diogenes and said to the tsar: “You forgot your shirt and me, the old man [you were to] remember.” [Hearing this] Diogenes sat in his carriage and accompanied by the patriarch and his court

⁷⁵ Among those electing the new emperor.

set off to seek the holy old man in the place where he saw him when he was chasing the animal. He did not find him there, however, and thought about getting back to Constantinople. During the night, the saint appeared to him [and said]: “Tsar Diogenes, search for me in the inner desert and you will find me.” The tsar and his servants went [there] to look for the saint and came to the place where he thought they would find him. There, at God’s command, he put a lookout. [It was a place where earlier] an old man had spotted a white eagle alighting in the cave. The old man then built a church where he saw the eagle. The tsar went to the place with the cave, entered, and found in the cave the incorruptible body of the saint. The tsar and the patriarch kneeled down before the relics of the saint and bowed deeply to him. Then they lifted the relics of the saint on their shoulders and carried him to the river Pshinja. Here the tsar made a coffin and adorned it with gold. He thought about bringing it to his monastery, built in the memory of the saint, but the coffin with the relics could not be moved. And again the saint appeared to the tsar in a dream [and told him]: “Do not move me from here.”

The next day after he got up the tsar built here a splendid house in the name of St Prohor, consecrated it, and placed the coffin with the relics of the saint in the church. They put him on the right side of the altar, where there is a small crypt. Chrism flowed from the saint and filled all the vessels in the church. He cured the blind so that they could see; the lame so that they could walk; and granted health to the sick. The tsar rejoiced with unspeakable delight. He installed there managers, elders, and monks under an abbot and gave them estates that provided full support for them. Then he went back to Constantinople, thankful that he obtained such a present.

Let us too, obtain cure for our souls, salvation, and bodily health, amen! Oh, stupendous miracle! Even to this day the chrism continues to flow from the tomb of the saint and heals all those who come with faith to his holy sepulcher. To our God glory for all ages! Amen.

113 Life of St Joachim of Osogovo, *twelfth century*.

St Joachim is the fourth and last of the great southwestern Bulgarian saints whose lives testify to the spirituality of the epoch. He lived during the late eleventh and the early twelfth centuries and founded the great monastery of Osogovo, also known as Sarandapor. His *Life* and a service for him were composed in the monastery after his cult developed and spread among the Slavic-speaking Balkan population. The service is extant in thirteenth-century copies; the earliest copy of the *Life* is from the fifteenth century. Little is known

about the saint himself: all of it comes from the *Life*. Edition: *BSM*, 404–18 (the best and fullest text; the MS was destroyed during World War II).

Life and deeds of our blessed Father Joachim of Sarandapor.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who rules over and possesses heaven and earth as well as the sea and every living creature, is Tsar of the tsars and Lord of the lords. He is the only immortal, His power is immeasurable and His lordship is eternal. He willed, on account of His mercy and immense benevolence, to incarnate through the holy Virgin and Mother of God and come to earth because He wanted to set humankind free from the oppressing torments of the devil; enlighten those held captive in the darkness of ignorance, that is, in the devil's lechery through his divine light; and through penance instruct everyone in wisdom, as He loudly proclaims in a certain place of the Holy Gospels, saying: "I am the light of the world and those who follow me will not walk in darkness but will obtain eternal life."⁷⁶

The Lord, who truly lived in the flesh of men and likened Himself to us humans in everything except in sin, and voluntarily suffered to save humanity for He was crucified, given vinegar and spleen to drink, and died, resurrected on the third day and after His resurrection appeared to His disciples, the apostles, blessed them in peace and then ascended to Heaven and sat down at the right side of the Father and, as the prophet David exclaimed, "God came out in the midst of rejoicing; the Lord [came out] amidst the voices of trumpets."⁷⁷ And further: after His ascension He sent His Holy Spirit to His disciples and apostles through an apparition with flaming tongues. He granted them spiritual gifts and bounties that sharpened their minds and sent them out in the world. "Teach," He told them, "all the people and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the indivisible Trinity of one essence, and in the One God and Lord."⁷⁸ They strove in the name of God and filled the universe with signs and the miracle of the divine sermons, fished humanity out of the darkness of ignorance, led men to the light of wisdom, and through the communion made them sons of God and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.

However, the enemy, who since the beginning and forever resented the salvation of humankind and the preaching of the name of Christ,

⁷⁶ After John 8:12. Most of the quotes are very loose renditions of the Scriptural texts.

⁷⁷ Psalms 46:6.

⁷⁸ After Matthew 28:19–20.

which His holy disciples carried and spread all over the universe, could not stand quiet. Torn by envy, he immediately instigated persecutions of Christians. He served the lawless torturers diligently and because of impiety wanted to weaken the faith of piety, the faith of those who professed the Trinity of one essence, and mercilessly and ruthlessly gave them over to a variety of tortures. But the true servants of Christ, the emulators of His passions, burning with Christ's love, eagerly desired to die for Christ and thus expose the cruelty of the torturers. They preached the orthodox faith to the world and spoke to one another: "The day of salvation has come! Come, brothers, let us work for Christ who shed His blood for us. If we die for Christ, we will live in Christ, as the apostle said.⁷⁹ The true soldiers get distinguished in the battles of the tsar." The numbers of the martyrs grew just like the Israelites about whom God once told Abraham: "Their seed will be like the stars of the sky and like the sand on the sea shore."⁸⁰

Those who chose the path of pain and suffering received a never-decaying crown. Others kept the law of love through love and were merciful to the poor and kind to every one. Still others vexed their flesh with fasts and prayers and fled the world to become hermits. They went in the mountains and lived in the deserts, supplicating [God] with prayers and tears.

New zealots and emulators of such a life became our marvelous and newly enlightened desert-dwelling fathers, heavenly humans and earthly angels, the fellows of Christ, John, Prohor and Gabriel, and with them our blessed father Joachim. These four men, chosen company of God and diligent workers of Christ went out with the plough to plow the furrow of faith and plant spiritual seeds as well as to harvest the ripe sheaves which had borne hundred-times more to offer virtuous fruit to Christ.

Our holy and blessed father John flew from one mountain to another like a bird and [climbed] tall mountains like a deer: just so this blessed one went up the high mountain that the people habitually call Knishava, settled there and became a companion of the One Lord and God. He lived alone and conversed with himself only, belaboring himself extraordinarily with fasts and prayers, bows and all-night vigils. Many times was he tempted by demons and suffered pain and torture. Yet

⁷⁹ After Romans 14:8

⁸⁰ After Genesis 28:14.

because of this he obtained from the Lord God and Great Tsar over everyone that St John the Theologian came to him and delivered to him the word of God.

Our blessed father Prohor performed no meaner feats than John. Desiring to distinguish himself by emulating him in everything and obtain the things he wished for, he prayed to God, saying: “Lord, lead me on the straight path so that I can enter the altar of God, of God who makes me rejoice!”⁸¹ He went on his way singing this and others of the songs of David. By God’s will, this blessed one happened to dwell in the desert of Vranja, by the river called Pshinja. Here he attained through fast a life equal to that of angels, accomplishing good and God-pleasing deeds. With peace, through the will of Christ, he passed into the heavenly dwelling. After his passing away and even to this day his saintly relics perform amazing and astonishing miracles. Then, at the request of a certain pious tsar, a temple was built for the blessed one in the name of the holy and great martyr of Christ, George.

Our holy and blessed Gabriel appeared in the so-called mountain of Lesnovo and there performed well, lived in virtue, and passed away in the Lord. A temple in the name of the *archstrategos* Michael was built for him here.

This holy and blessed father of ours Joachim emulated the God-carrying Ignatius. He soared like a shining star from the west and came to the east, to the region of the mountainous desert of Osogovo and settled there, and an angel of God was his protector and guardian. He always thought about the One God in himself and prayed to be deemed worthy of receiving what he desired most.

In the deep of night on his first night he went to the village customarily called Gradets, to the house of a pious and very wealthy *bolijarin* of that region.⁸² The church that was there was a very small building. The blessed one went there and sat in front of it to perform his prayers. The above mentioned *bolijarin* came to the church, found him sitting in front of it, and stroke a conversation. As they conversed, the blessed one told him: “I will openly confess to you brother that I am fed up with too many labors. I have heard that there are in this region and in the mountain of Osogovo suitable places for monks, especially for those who desire to be hermits and work sincerely for God. But I, the

⁸¹ Matthew 13:23.

⁸² The village of Gradets is in the district of Kriva Palanka, modern Serbia.

ignorant one, do not know how to get there and obtain what I desire; tell us please, what you know.” The *boljariin* revealed to him the truth in detail and showed him a place in the foothills of the mountain of Osogovo, by one of the local streams, the river called Skupitsa; its name was Babin Dol. “That is what you seek, oh honorable man,” he said, “that is the place, and you will find it well suiting your wish and desire. There is such and such cave there, all painted in colors, but the place is dark and humid.”

The blessed one took gladly the advice of the *boljariin* and praised God and the most honorable Mother of God. “This is how they willed to guide me, the humble one, to find such a place to live and to end my life according to the commandments of the Lord: in fast and prayer, tears and vigils, hunger and thirst, naked and freezing; and persist in all kinds of ascetic sufferings. In this manner I will go through this short and tearful being and will be deemed worthy of receiving the heavenly bounty and delivered from the fire of Hell. And you, most kind brother in Christ, remember God’s love and come to my humbleness for as long as my spirit inhabits my body, so that you too get enriched by the gentle and great Gift-giver and his mercy and kindness.” And he stayed there until dawn.

On the morning the blessed one left that place and set off on his way, rejoicing. He went singing and praising God, saying: “Oh my soul, return to your resting place for God will do something good for you.” And further: “Lord, point out to me Thee way so I can take it because my soul strives for you.” He came to the place prepared for him by God, called Sarandapor, and there he spent the years of his life. He distinguished himself with virtuous deeds, burdened himself with heavy labors, with sighs for God, countless bows, incessant nightly vigils, unflinching prayers, and in hot tears he conversed with God day and night. Because of all this he obtained this great gift from the Lord and God of all: to exorcise spirits from men. When the time of his death drew close, by God’s will two men of the mountain came to him. He, having seen them, spoke to them: “I see brothers that you are much aggrieved: what makes you come to us?” They responded: “It is our custom, father, to go in the mountain to hunt because we are poor. With God’s help we always catch game. But now we strove for many days and caught nothing. This is why we came back again.” The blessed one took pity on them and said: “Children, it is already late evening, spend the night here; then I will let you go with peace.” On the morrow he ordered them to deviate from their usual trails.

He directed them to the opposite and dark side, [and told them] to climb on the top of the mountain and from there to descend to their home place. Taking the order of the saint, they took the trail as the blessed one instructed them. And as they climbed to the top of the mountain, they caught plenty of game. They rejoiced and praised God, telling each other: “Through the prayer of the saint God fulfilled our wishes!” One of them got back to the saint and told him how, through his prayers, God granted them a good catch. The blessed one blessed them and let them go in peace, saying: “Come often to see me and to receive blessing.” They went back home rejoicing and with the saint’s prayer and blessing.

Some time after that these two men came again to the blessed one to see him, wishing to receive his blessing. They found him already having crossed from this one to the eternal home, and were much saddened on account of his passing away. They shed many tears. Then they made a tomb in front of the cave, and prepared and laid down the honorable body of the saint in it. Invisible angels sang funeral songs and the relics of the saint emitted an incredibly sweet odor, which filled the cave and the place around it. When they saw the most glorious and marvelous miracle of the blessed one, they praised God who glorified him, saying to themselves: “This one is truly a saint of God.”

The rumor about the holy father and his death spread around that region. However, on God’s command it was forbidden to any man to take the relics of the blessed one. Only the two men used to come to the honorable and holy grave and carried incense and candles to honor the blessed holy father. They did this tirelessly through their lives. A long time passed in this manner and that generation died out.

In the days of the Greek Tsar Manuel, called Porphyrogenetos⁸³ God decided to glorify the man who had pleased him and renovate the holy place of his life for He did not suffer long the lighted candle to be kept under a lid just like you cannot hide the town built on a mountaintop. There was a clergyman called Theodore in that time in the district of Ovche Pole in the village called Osmird Dol. When his wife left this life Theodore was much distressed and after much deliberation began to think about adopting the monastic way of life. This actually happened, as the account will show later. The said Theodore had an aunt, a prudent woman, to whom he went and told everything

⁸³ Manuel I Comnenos (1143–1180).

about his wish to become a monk. His words saddened her but nevertheless, she encouraged him to pursue his intentions. She supported him like a mother sympathizing with her child and told him: “Child, I do not know if you would be able to suffer prayer and vigils and hunger and thirst and be quiet and meek, humble and obedient and kind to everyone; generous and of a brotherly demeanor; forgo pride and remembering evil, and avoid slander and usury; be merciful and generous to the poor and not a hypocrite. Such are the virtues of those who wish to don the monastic habit. We have heard that there is no faith like Christianity and no community like that of the monks. That is why it is fitting to choose such a way of life and have a great desire to direct your soul to Christ and save it by becoming an intercessor for the salvation of others.”

Theodore listened carefully to his mother’s⁸⁴ words and followed up on them not in words but in deeds and left the world and the one who had power over it. He ran, as the saying goes, like a deer for water springs. So he, burning in love for Christ, wanted to get what he desired. He went to the mountain of Osogovo, to the place called Sarandapor because he had heard about the blessed father Joachim and that he had chosen to live his apostle-like and ascetic life there. He wanted to settle in the same place and live there the life of a hermit with the blessing of the saint’s prayer. He returned home to collect the things he needed and told his mother about everything that had happened. Then, when he lay down to sleep, our blessed father Joachim appeared to him and told him: “Theodore, where are you going?” He was seized by terror and answered: “My lord, I have heard about our blessed father Joachim who used to live in the foothills of the mountain of Osogovo, in the place called Sarandapor. Through his holy prayers and God’s help, I, poor and sinful that I am, decided it would be good to settle in that place so that through his prayers God directs our steps to the fulfillment of the divine commandments.” The saint came closer to him, crossed him with the sign of the cross, and took out of his habit a small vessel, which appeared to be gilded. He poured [chrism] out of it on his hands and anointed his head, face, hands, and chest. Then he blessed him and said: “Go with peace child, God’s grace will guard you!” When Theodore woke up and realized what vision and blessing

⁸⁴ The text confuses Theodore’s aunt with his mother; the confusion must have been in the original account.

he had been granted he praised God and the saint and did not tell anyone what he had seen. He went back to the said place, settled there, and said: “Here is my eternal resting place. I will dwell here because I so desire!” He uttered other words of praise and thanks to God and tears wetted his face. He found a priest inspired by God, bowed his head before him and had his hair cut off and with it all the earthly passions and lusts. This is how he became the first abbot of that place. With the help of God and the prayers of the saint many monks soon gathered around him.

Some time after that the said Abbot Theodore, called in the monastic habit Theophan, began to build a church in the name of the holy father. He collected all the materials he needed for the ecclesiastical building and as he thought about the completion of the church, it occurred to him to place in a tomb the holy relics so that the ascetic struggles and sufferings of the blessed father Joachim were remembered. Because he did not know the place where the blessed body was he began to pray with a broken heart: “My lord and holy God-pleasing father I, your sinful servant, am not worthy of thinking and speaking such a thing about Your Blessedness, however, on account of your holy and honorable prayers do not turn down the request of us, the sinful ones. Grant us your mercy, show your great pity for the poor, and unlock the untouchable treasury of your holy relics for us so that when we see them we praise the One who glorified you; show us the strong faith and the even stronger daring of your greatness.” Immediately, in that same moment, the grave with his blessed body appeared like the shining light of a lightning; the ground rose and was adorned with sweet-smelling flowers. The abbot and all those with him were terrified, for the cloud of light shone upon them. They stepped forward deeply moved, fell down on their knees with love and shed warm tears, bowing down to the honorable grave. They took in their hands of the earth, mixed it with tears and offered songs of thankfulness to God and the one who had pleased him. They wove flower wreaths of many colors and sang in this manner:

“Rejoice, child of the desert;
rejoice, divine adornment of the hermits;
rejoice, praise of the blessed;
rejoice, healer of the sick and encouragement of the poor;
rejoice, speedy helper of those who need you in their hour of trouble;
rejoice, because you flew from West to East to enlighten our souls,

rejoice, because you filled the mountaintops and caves of Osogovo with wisdom and made a city in the desert;
 rejoice, savior of men and exorcist of demons;
 rejoice, because you ascended in the eternal dwellings and reached the Upper Jerusalem and the angelic powers marvel at you;
 rejoice, speaker of prayers and intercessor before God for all of your servants;
 rejoice, because you counted what existed as non-existent and made what decays non-perishable through your supernatural feats;
 rejoice, all you lands round about here and praise God who granted us such light;
 rejoice, heavenly man and earthly angel, most wealthy Joachim;
 What human mind can praise you as you deserve and what songs can we sing to Your Blessedness?
 Do not cease to pray for your servants, oh blessed father, so that we, the sinful, find in you an eager intercessor before God, the Lord of all in the day of Judgment, when we go through the temporary vanity of this life!"

Such were the worthy funeral praises that the brothers and the abbot sang then. When the church was completed the honorable grave was opened and the abbot together with the brothers served the divine mass for the glory and praise of the blessed father.

After a while the saint appeared to the abbot in a dream and told him: "It is fitting that you take my relics from the grave soon, for my passing away occurred eight years ago, before the great darkness." The abbot told the saint: "My lord, I wanted to fulfill your command sooner, but I do not dare do it because I am afraid of the people in the region, above all of the local *bolijars*. However, if Your Blessedness commands it, I will call them and with their help will carry your holy and non-perishable body." The saint answered: "Don't you understand? If I wanted to reveal myself to these people, I would not have brought you from another foundation. I am telling you: cast off any fear and grief and do what I am asking you to do as soon as possible for I will receive with love everyone who comes to me with faith. No one should even think about being patron of my church; I will be the patron of my own place." The abbot, however, was so scared that he neglected the command of the saint. Shortly after that the blessed one appeared again to the abbot and addressed him angrily: "How long will you disobey my will and disregard my command? Do you wish to be afflicted by terrifying apparitions and torments? I do hope to deliver you, through the power of my Christ, from the pains of the beyond:

do you think I am powerless to protect you from mortal men? Get up now and go in the forest. I will show you the tree from which you will make the casket for my relics.” The abbot, as much as he wished to disobey him, got up and went to the forest. The saint pointed out to him a tree at the Three Springs, for that is how the place was called, the Three Springs.

When dawn shone through, the abbot woke up, went in the forest, and found the tree where the saint had showed it to him. He praised God and the holy father and made a casket as the saint had commanded him. Having done this, the abbot ordered all the brothers to gather in the church for an all-night vigil. When they got up in the morning, they came to the most pure grave singing songs and praises and carrying candles and incense-burners. They lifted the holy and honorable relics of the blessed father and put them in the casket with great glory and honor, brought the casket to the newly built church in the name of the saint and laid it down in it. Gathered together with diligence and love they fell down on their knees, shed warm tears and kissed the holy relics, praising God, the great Patron, who granted them such a bounty. Any blind, handicapped, and seized by polluted demons people who came and touched the relics of the saint got healed.

The rumor of the marvelous and most glorious feats of the holy and blessed father spread all over the land. The people began to come to the saint to worship him, bringing candles and incense to honor him. There were in that time three noble brothers [*velmozhi*] who were the lords of that land. When they heard about the holy father Joachim and that his relics performed such marvelous and most glorious feats, the two younger brothers took presents and went to bow down to the saint, accepted his blessings, and went back home, rejoicing and praising God. The eldest brother, at the instigation of the devil, got angry and said: “Who is this monk and from where did he come to dare to expose the holy relics on my land? He was not afraid to take them without my knowledge and did not even inform us! I have the right to do whatever I please in my own lordship and no one can forbid me to do it!” Such things did he utter in his anger. However, the judgement of God is righteous. The prophet said: “Pour Your anger over them and the wrath of Your anger will overwhelm them; their house will be deserted.” Soon after that the son of the *bolijarin* died. He grieved so much that he forgot his grudge against the abbot. When the forty days [of mourning] after the death of his son had passed the devil rekindled

his anger. He wanted to shame the abbot and drive him out of his dominion. The *bolijarin* came to the church angrily and found the abbot and the brothers singing the hours before it in a somewhat strange way. He began to insult the abbot and the brother, saying: "Monk, how headstrong you are to dare even think about such a thing; to take the holy relics, on my land, without my knowledge? You dishonored my power! Don't you know that in my dominion no one opposes me? How did you dare insulting me like that?" He said many other things in his anger. "Listen, *bolijarin*, and do not get angry without reason," said the abbot. "Three times I hesitated to do it. However, the saint appeared to me and, threatening me with terrible threats, ordered me to do it. This is why I did it. It was with great fear that I took the holy relics. What are we, men, you and I, when the saint is here and can do whatever pleases him. Here you are, do as you wish, I am between the two of you."

When the *bolijarin* heard that the rage of his anger subsided. His angry face softened and he rushed to the church to bow to the saint. He kissed his relics with joy and begged the abbot for forgiveness. The abbot granted him forgiveness and blessing. After that, when the holy and divine liturgy was over, they went into the refectory and had a good feast. In the end, the *bolijarin* got from the table, received [again] the forgiveness of the abbot and the brothers and got on his horse to ride home. Oh, unfathomable will of God! A holy miracle happened! His horse got frightened, began thrashing around, threw him on the ground and his legs broke. This happened to expose his inhuman violence over them [i.e., the monks]. They made a gurney and took him home.

Soon after that the saint appeared in the dream of one of his servants and told him: "Tell your master: 'Bring a gift to the holy father and you will heal in eight days.'" The servant told his lord what the saint had explained to him in the dream. When the *bolijarin* heard the servant's account he immediately ordered that they take from his stables first the horse that wounded him and then two oxen and fifty sheep. Then the lord ordered to be taken to the holy father together with the gifts. He said: "My lord and most holy father, forgive me, the sinful one. Forgive the inhuman violence in which I indulged and sinned unwittingly." Eight days later the sick man was cured, thanks to the prayers of the saint.

Let us recall another miracle of the saint. There used to be a manager there [*eklesiarch*] appointed by the abbot and the brothers of the monastery to manage the church and keep the gold given as gifts. The devil instilled in him the thought to take secretly some of the church's

gold and hide it; he filled a pot with it. When he saw that it was full he took it out and buried it in the threshing ground named after the saint. That night, the saint came into the dream of the abbot and led him to the place where the said manager had hidden the gold, and ordered him to dig. He began to dig and found the pot with the gold. The saint told the abbot: “This gold was hidden here by your manager who was secretly taking now two, now three silver coins [*belizi*]. Do not bring it back into the church, for it is cursed. Spend it as you wish.” On the morning the abbot went alone to the place to check if the vision had been true or a trick and found everything as the saint had shown him. He called the manager, brought him over to the place and ordered him to dig. He hesitated but then he dug out the gold and saw his crime exposed. He fell at the feet of the abbot begging forgiveness and wishing to bring the gold back into the monastery. The abbot told him: “When St Joachim showed that place to me he forbade me to take it back into the monastery for it is not blessed.”

The saint showed himself again to the abbot and told him: “You should know that in the future when humankind will be overwhelmed by sin and Orthodoxy and piety will decline, many places will be deserted and the singing of praises in the holy monasteries will cease because of violence and disturbances, many holy relics will be moved away from their foundations and other places will inherit them. I, however, place my hope in the power of my Christ and His most pure Mother, that my relics will not leave this place and my temple will not be deserted.”

Once, during the feast of the blessed father, in the time for Evensong the devil who hates good wanted to put in action his evil thoughts and caused an argument between two brothers who were priests in the church. They quarreled bitterly. When they stepped out of the church, one of them embraced the other, asking humbly for forgiveness. The other, however, puffed up with pride, and his mind seized by evil memories—the beginning of all evil—did not respond with humility but left in anger. When the vigils were over the brother who left the church in rage suddenly saw himself thrown in the gorge to the right of the church. A great commotion ensued. The brothers brought out candles and rushed to the brother who fell down from the height but found him sitting there safe and sound. They pulled him out unscathed and praised God and the holy father who worked such marvelous and most glorious miracles.

Another miracle: The abbot had the custom to fast with the brothers on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings. On these days of the week they went into the woods, everyone minding their own business,

and many of them found there [wild] fruit which they ate secretly, saying to themselves that they had not sinned for it was only fruit. The saint appeared in the abbot's dream and told him: "How come you are so negligent about the brothers and their complete salvation? You do not inquire carefully with them about the rules and customs that they observe because you think that they live in fast and abstinence. However, when they are in the woods they eat the fruit they find there. Don't you know that God will hold you responsible for the observance of the spiritual rules which they neglect?" When the abbot heard the saint's words, he instructed the brothers well and with orders and threats put an end to that lawlessness.

There was a brother who was superintendent [*kelarij*]. Tempted by the devil he fell prey to hypocritical envy. On top of it he was rude with the brothers, purloined much of the monastery's property, and gave himself over to drunkenness, in the company of others who were like him in his lawlessness. He went so far in his inhumanity to consider himself the most diligent supervisor. He tramped upon his conscience and, filled with envy, hurled insults at one of the priests, accusing him and saying that he secretly appropriated some of the common property. He did not see the beam in his eye but spotted the straw in the eye of another. The priest told him: "Brother, let us leave it to God to show every one their own deeds and the holy father Joachim adjudicate between us. God is my witness that I bring in everything that I collect but you know why you are speaking like this." The superintendent did not think he would do any good by picking up that affair, but the justice of the saint immediately exposed his hatred. All of a sudden he rushed to flee, but the brothers caught him and tied him up well. The priest came and asked him: "Have you taken anything from the property?" Then the superintendent, as much as he did not want to incriminate himself, said: "I did, and that is why I brought this vengeance on myself and the sentence of the saint." His face was totally changed and looked terrible. The brothers wanted to bring him into the church and pray for him. However, they were unable to lead him in, even though four men pulled him. With great effort they barely managed to drag him to the spring that flowed in front of the church. He shouted at them: "Why do you torment me, the poor wretch, dragging me by force? Four of you hold me and push me forward but I feel as if behind me there are others who pull me back again." Then they left him well tied up. One of the brothers remained there to guard him and the rest went back

to their chores. The brother, however, was overwhelmed by sleep and dozed off. He [the superintendent] tore off the rope with his teeth and took to flight: he reached the great rock which stands at the place where the road comes out at the church, and threw himself down from it. They never found his body. Many were terrified by what happened.

In that time peace reigned upon the entire land. The people lived their lives in great humility and gathered from everywhere for the feast day of the holy father. A certain monk from the town of Veles by the name of Arsenius came as well, in the time of the all-night vigils and praise-singing. When the moment for bowing to the holy relics came everyone stepped forward eagerly, carrying candles and incense and shedding warm tears of love, and diligently kissed the holy and honorable relics of the holy father. When the said monk came close enough to kiss the holy relics of the blessed one, he pulled off a trick. He secretly cut off one of his pinkies and swore in his heart that he had done it for the memory of the holy father. He wrapped it up in a kerchief and placed it in a small box without anyone noticing. In the morning everyone went out of the church and left rejoicing and praising God and the saint. The above mentioned Arsenius was the last to leave, carrying on himself part of the relics of the saint. When he reached the place before the church he suddenly swayed this way and that, as if overwhelmed by drunkenness, for the saint wanted to throw him in the river gorge. One of the brothers went after him and asked him: “Brother, what is going on, why are swaying like that?” He, overwhelmed by shame and embarrassment, confessed everything. The monk told him: “Brother, go back right away and return what you have taken before you get in big trouble.” The saint appeared in Arsenius’ dream and told him: “Who are you to dare steal of my relics? I thought about showing a terrible sign through you, but I took pity on you because you took a vow to worship me all your life. Go in peace, I will be patient with you.” Arsenius praised God and the saint and went on his way rejoicing.

Brothers and fathers, I wrote with great diligence and attentiveness everything that I was able to inquire and find out about the marvelous and most glorious miracles of the holy and blessed father and desert-dweller Joachim, for the benefit of the reader and praise of the saint. I hope that through the prayers of the saint I, the sinful one who wrote this, will on Judgment Day partake of the eternal goods, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom glory and honor are due! Amen.

*Popular Culture: Annals, Visions, Prophecies*114 Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals, *eleventh century*.

The *Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals* is the most important historical work in the popular tradition. It was composed by the end of the eleventh century and is the longest and most detailed of the four now extant works in the same vein, which illustrate Bulgarian historical mentality in the context of suppressed state tradition, foreign domination, and lack of official sponsorship for history-writing. Combining eschatology and history, it reveals a strong conviction in the Bulgarians' providential mission. The *Annals* are preserved in only one manuscript of Serbian provenance. Edition: Ivanov, *Bogomiski knigi i legendi*, 280–87.

I, Prophet Isaiah, beloved among the prophets of our Lord God Jesus Christ, came on God's command to tell you what will happen in the last days of humankind all over the earth. Not I am narrating this, brothers, but the Heavenly Father told me this through His Holy Spirit. Then he sent to me his holy angel and lifted me up from the earth to the heavenly heights, and there I saw angels who sang and praised the Lord. Then [he] took me again to the Second Heaven and there I saw many arrangements and rejoiced mightily on account of what I saw, and all my bones were confounded. And the angel who led me said: "Straighten up, Isaiah, to see the great and unspoken divine glory!" He led me to the Third Heaven, then to the Fourth, the Fifth, the Six, until we reached even to the Seventh Heaven. There I saw a judge, sitting on a high and most sublime throne, and I saw a river of boiling fire flowing around him, and thousands and thousands of angels served him and innumerable more stood before him. Then again I saw to his right angels singing to him, and to his left sinners crying. Then I asked the angel that led me: "Sire, show me my Lord, who called me from the bosom of my mother." The angel of the Powers of the Lord told me: "Listen, oh Isaiah, chosen prophet of God, it is impossible to see the Lord in the body, but you will hear His voice, directed to you." And then, therefore, I heard the voice of my Lord God who spoke thus to me: "Isaiah, Isaiah, my beloved one, go and tell to humankind on earth all that you saw and heard, and what will happen to the last of [your] kind in the last days." And I told Him: "Lord, I feel good here; do not send me back to where I came from." Then I heard the voice of my Lord God who spoke thus to me: "Isaiah, my beloved prophet, how else will the people who live on earth learn? There will be no other prophet after you, nor will there be another after that, nor will any one be coming up, nor will any one tell my words." Then the angel brought me down from the heavens and put me down on earth.

And then I heard a voice that told me something else: “Isaiah, my beloved prophet, go westwards to the upper countries of Rome, take one third part of the Coumans⁸⁵ called Bulgarians, and populate the land called Karvuna⁸⁶ that was evacuated by the Romans and the Hellenes.” Then I, brothers, came to the left parts of Rome on God’s command, took aside a third of the Coumans and led them on the way, pointing out with my finger, and brought them over to the river called Zatiusa and to another one, called Ereusa.⁸⁷ Back then there were three large rivers. I populated the land of Karvuna, called Bulgarian land, for it had been deserted by the Hellenes for one hundred and thirty years. And I populated it with many people from the Danube to the sea and I made one among them a tsar: his name is Tsar Slav.⁸⁸ This tsar set up villages and towns. For some time these people were pagans. This tsar made a hundred mounds in the Bulgarian land; then they gave him the name “The Hundred-mound Tsar.” These were years of plenty, and there were hundred mounds in his tsardom. He was the first tsar in the Bulgarian land, and ruled for one hundred and nineteen years and passed away.

Then after him another tsar was found in the Bulgarian land, a child carried in a basket for three years; he was given the name Tsar Ispor⁸⁹ and he took over the Bulgarian realm. This tsar built great cities: at the Danube, the city of Dristar; a great castle between the Danube and the sea; and he built the city of Pliska. This tsar slew a multitude of Ismailites and populated the entire land of Karvuna, for before that there were Ethiopians. A child was born of him, and it was called Isot. Tsar Ispor ruled over the Bulgarian land for one hundred and seventy two years and then the Ismailites killed him on the Danube. After the slaying of Ispor, tsar of the Bulgarians, the Coumans were called Bulgarians, for earlier they had been godless pagans under Ispor and [lived] in great iniquity and were always enemies of the Greek tsardom for many years.

⁸⁵ From the eleventh century onwards, the name Coumans acquires the meaning of “pagan nomads” and as such is used for the pagan Bulgars as well.

⁸⁶ Northeastern Bulgaria.

⁸⁷ Possibly Dnieper and Dniester.

⁸⁸ Eponim of the Slavs who had settled in the area before the Bulgar migration in 680/681.

⁸⁹ Reference to Khan Asparuch.

And after that again took the Bulgarian tsardom the son of Tsar Ispor; his name was Isot.⁹⁰ This tsar slew Ozius, the tsar of the East with his armies, and Goliat, the sea Frank. There were many great cities in the years of the Bulgarian Tsar Isot. Two sons were born of him: he called the one Boris and the other Simeon. Tsar Isot ruled one hundred years and three months and died in the city called Pliska.

After the death of Tsar Isot his son Boris took over the Bulgarian tsardom. He was pious and very devout. This tsar converted the entire country of Bulgaria and built many churches all over the Bulgarian land and round about the river Bregalnitsa and there took over the tsardom. On Ovche pole [Sheep's Field] he built white churches and went over to Dobrich, and there ended his life. He ruled sixteen years, without sin and without a wife. His tsardom was blessed and he died in God and in peace.

Then Simeon, his brother, took over the Bulgarian tsardom again, and built great cities at the sea, and he built the great city of Preslav, and there he took over the tsardom all the way to the city called Zvechan and to Thessaloniki. The city of Preslav [he] built and worked on for twenty eight years. Many portents did Tsar Simeon produce. [He] ruled for one hundred and thirty years and sired St Peter, the Bulgarian tsar, a man saintly and wholly orthodox. At that time, when Tsar Simeon ruled, he taxed his land that much: from every province he took one sheaf, one egg, and one spoon of butter per year. That was his tax on the land, nothing else did he require from his people. And there was plenty at that time, under this Tsar Simeon.⁹¹

After his death his son Tsar Peter took over the Bulgarian tsardom, and he was tsar of the Bulgarians and of the Greeks as well. He ruled the Bulgarian land for twelve years, without sin and without a wife, and his rule was blessed. In the days and years of St Peter, the tsar of the Bulgarians, there was plenty of everything, that is to say, of wheat and butter, honey, milk and wine, the land was overflowing with every gift of God, there was no dearth of anything but by the will of God everything was in abundance and to satiety. And then, in the years of St Peter, tsar of the Bulgarians, there was a widow in the Bulgarian land, young, wise, and very pious, by the name of Elena. She gave

⁹⁰ Either Khan Tervel, who helped the Byzantines during the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717/718, or Khan Krum, referring to his victory over Nicephoros Genikos in 811.

⁹¹ A patriotic bias idealizing the times of Bulgarian statehood.

birth to Constantine, a saintly and very pious man. He was the son of Constantine the Green and Elena, and this Constantine was called Porphyrogenetos and he was tsar of the Romans.⁹² Because of envy his mother Elena fled from the Roman Hellenes to the city of Visa, found herself with a child, and gave birth to Tsar Constantine. To this tsar an angel of God revealed the good word about the cross from the East. Tsar Constantine and Tsar Peter loved one another. He gathered his army, took his mother and set off to go East, over the sea, to the place Krainievo.⁹³ There was a small town called Byzantium where Constantine was staying. As Constantine came to that place, he saw that it was desolate from sea to sea, and thought in himself: “If I go to the place Krainievo and find the honest cross of Christ, on which Christ was crucified, I will come back to this place, I will have a city built here, and I will call it New Jerusalem, the resting place of saints and the adornment of tsars.” However, while Tsar Constantine was on his way to the place Krainievo, certain violent men came, as tall as giants, and devastated the Bulgarian land along the sea coast.⁹⁴ The Bulgarian tsar Peter, an orthodox man, gave up his tsardom, fled to the West, to Rome, and there ended his life.

After that another tsar arose, called Seleukia with the nickname Simeklit.⁹⁵ He went up to the mountain called Vitosha and went to the field called Romania, and there he took the tsardom. He built five cities in the Bulgarian land: 1/ Plovdiv; 2/ Srem; 3/Breznik; 4/Sredets; 5/Nish. He ruled in the city of Sredets over the Bulgarian land for thirty seven years. And there did Tsar Seleukia end his life, by the city of Breznik. While Seleukia was building the five cities in the Bulgarian land, Tsar Constantine found the honest cross of Christ. He came back to the city of Byzantium and thought in himself: “Where is that desolate place? I will build a city and I will call it Constantine-city [Constantinople]. Then sent Tsar Constantine an evil curator to Rome and told him: “Go and chase away the Roman army for six years.” He

⁹² The *Annals* confuse Constantine the Great with his tenth century namesake, Constantine Porphyrogenitos, and make the composite personage the son of the saintly Peter (927–970).

⁹³ End-place; some apocrypha identify it with Jerusalem. It could refer to Golgotha as well (Ts. Stepanov).

⁹⁴ The invasions of the Kievan Rus in the tenth century, led by the Princes Oleg and Svjatoslav.

⁹⁵ Here the *Annals* shade into myth, apocrypha, and memories of very ancient Roman past.

went and sent them away for three years. The curator was a wicked man, and he conspired with the Hellenes to slay Tsar Constantine and his mother Elena. But God saw their high-minded treachery and struck them with an invisible stick and they became invisible. The evil curator had neither wife nor children. And the Romans were taken in the New Jerusalem. Then Tsar Constantine arranged well the entire tsardom of [New] Jerusalem with royal palaces, set off with his army toward the Danube, and built a city called Bdin, and its nickname was “Babylon on the Seven Hills.” And again did Constantine populate the Bulgarian lands to the west. After taking all these lands, he created nine cities, and spent sixty two years in his tsardom and passed away.

After him another tsar arose in the Bulgarian land. His name was Simeon and he ruled twelve years and died.

After that again a tsar arose, by the name of Nicephoros, and took over the Bulgarian tsardom. He slew the lawless tsar Maximian and his army. He also built Motik, and Morunets, and Ser, to the west Belgrade and Kostur, and at the Danube, Nicopolis. He ruled for forty three years and perished.

He had a child whose name was Simeon the Most Wise. He took over the Bulgarian tsardom, but he was dishonest and evil with the people and he ruined the lands of Bulgaria, Jerusalem, and Rome, the provinces of Tsar Constantine. Then all the people called aloud: “Woe to us, brothers, on account of this tsar!” Tsar Simeon spent four years in his tsardom and passed away.

Then another tsar arose, from another lineage, by the name of Basil.⁹⁶ The wreath of the pious and Christ-loving Tsar Constantine rested on his head. Tsar Basil took over the tsardom and destroyed all enemy lands and pagan peoples, the brave man that he was. In his days there were many goods among the people. Tsar Basil spent thirty years in rule, without a wife, sinless, and his rule was blessed.

In the days of Tsar Basil three brothers, [sons] of a widow-prophet-ess became tsars: Moses, Aaron, and Samuel.⁹⁷ And there was a son [alternative meaning: servant] of Samuel by the name of Augustinian.⁹⁸ He took over the Bulgarian and the Greek tsardom and reigned for thirty seven years.

⁹⁶ Emperor Basil II (976–1025).

⁹⁷ The *Annals* skip David, the fourth son of Count Nicholas.

⁹⁸ I.e., Alusian, see # 104.

And after that another tsar of the same widow arose, took over the kingdom, ruled three years, and passed away.

And after that another tsar arose, by the name of Roman, from the same lineage, and took over the Bulgarian tsardom. He gathered his army, [for he was] angry with the Eastern tsar, and went over the sea, [planning] to destroy two tsars, but destroyed his army.⁹⁹ And he came back from the East to the city of Preslav. Roman reigned for nine years and died.

After that another tsar arose, son of the orthodox Theodora, a pious and devout tsar. He built great monasteries in the Bulgarian and Greek lands. There were all kinds of goods during his reign. He ruled for twenty three years and passed away.

Then another tsar came out, by the name of Gagan, and his nickname was Odeljian,¹⁰⁰ a very handsome one. He took over the Bulgarian and the Greek tsardoms. He ruined in Kumida two cities, which were across the sea. And he built three cities in the Bulgarian land: 1/ Tcher-ven; 2/ Nesebar; 3/ Shtip. And there he ruled for twenty eight years and was cut down by a man from a foreign nation at Ovche Pole.¹⁰¹

And after that another tsar appeared from Constantine-city, by the name of Arev, sat on the throne of Tsar Constantine, ruled for seven years, and passed away.

And then another tsar came from the southern countries by the name of Turgii. He took over the wreath of Tsar Constantine and took over the entire Greek and Bulgarian tsardom, reigned for seventeen years and passed away.

And then certain violent swindlers called Petchenegs came out, lawless and infidel.

Vision of the Prophet Daniel, *Bulgarian eschatological annals in the folk tradition*, late eleventh century. 115

The *Vision* is narrower in scope than the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals*, but has a stronger eschatological component. Under the guise of prophesy it sums up the milestone developments of the First Kingdom, the conversion, the pagan reaction, the reigns of Simeon and Peter, the rule of Samuel, the expedition of the Russian prince Sventislav, the conquest of Bulgaria by Byzantium, the

⁹⁹ Possibly Roman IV Diogenes (1068–1071).

¹⁰⁰ Peter Deljan, grandson of Samuel, son of Gabriel Radomir (1014–1015) and leader of the anti-Byzantine revolt of 1040s.

¹⁰¹ Allusion to the Scandinavian mercenaries in Byzantine service who helped put down the revolt.

Bulgarian revolts against Byzantine rule, and the Petcheneg invasions of the Bulgarian lands in the eleventh century. Like the *Annals*, its composer was clearly hailed from western or southwestern Bulgaria and wove several place-names of the region into an account replete with Biblical names and events. Edition: Peter Srechkovich, *Zbornik popa Dragolja. Sadržina i proroshva* SSKA, 5 (1890), 10–12.

Archangel Gabriel came to the prophet Daniel and told him the following: “Daniel, you are needed and I have been sent to you to tell you the revelation of the last days. Put this on your heart, and listen up on behalf of those who wish to be in sin, of those who wish to be guilty.”

The archangel lifted me up and put me on a high mountain where no man has set foot before. And the archangel told me: “Put your [hands] on your heart and listen. These four large beasts that come out of the sea are not the four winds.” And I said to the angel: “My Lord, what are those beasts?” And he told me: “These are the great tsardoms of the last days. The first beast, the one that you see [in the shape of] a lion, is the tsardom of Saur. It will rise against the altar and will destroy it. And [he] will rule his tsardom for twenty three years with a shameless face and then his demise will come. And [he] will guard the power of Almighty God from interferences, and will put a high cleric on his throne. And when he takes power, his lineage in the same tsardom will rise against him. And they will topple him from the throne in the seventy-third year, and the other tsar will come back but will not kill him; other magnates will kill him. Then another scepter from the roots of his throne will rise. He will call himself with the name Phirnonum, his beastly name, and will take a wife from the Hellenic places. And then another scepter from his cross will rise. His name will be written with Hellenic writings from among the first letters of the alphabet, and in Latin [it will] begin with the eight letter. And he will reign with his mother Basileia and together with her will make resurrections to happen. His lusty mother will reign with him; she will lay him on her hands.”

Then I, Daniel, said to the archangel: “Oh my Lord God, I saw horns as well.” “That is the Roman tsardom. It will be the first one to rise in the last days. Woe to you, Babylon of the Seven Hills, for sons of the same seed will rule over you. Another scepter will rise. The tsar will be from the Goths, he will have [the tsardom] for fifteen years and his tsardom will be a strong one. In his days a mighty people will come out and will fight with him. And then these people will come back again, and the fight will cease. This tsar, much exhausted, will yield up

his spirit to God. Then another scepter will rise. Of his seed his son Gabriel will have the least time of all. Another scepter will rise, but then, in another time, the fifth horn will come. Then another scepter will rise. There will be blasphemies against the Almighty and for these blasphemies they will have an evil end. A hunter will lead them. And then another scepter will rise. His royal name is... [lacuna]. He will sit on the throne and will reign over the entire world. However, in the days of his rule four tsars will rise in the lands of his tsardom: two from the East and two from the West. You saw them in the images of the four beasts, coming out of the sea and disturbing it. That is who they are. Then they will fight a mighty battle, and will mow each other down like grasses in the field. There will be a great slaughter on earth. And the tsar of Sun City¹⁰² will rise and will kill them. It will be a great victory. He will go to Seven-peaked one¹⁰³ and establish peace among people. And then there will be slaughter. Those of my faith who reside with God will send envoys to the western countries, called Uranides. From the city of Sredets tormentors will issue forth and will commit offenses. They will die by the sword and will rise against one another in that place. They will battle between themselves. Two tormentors will arise: one from the East, from that city, and another from the West, from Glavinitsa. They will meet at the place called Kroduņij, and will cut down one another. The sea will swell of their blood. Then a woman hostile to them will come from the country of the city of Pernik, where she will be in the days of this prophesy. And after she sees her brother of the same mother, she will beat her chest and will give birth to a male child. Long time after that her son will be killed. Then the Ishmaelites¹⁰⁴ will come out to that last island of the Danube. They will capture many at the place called Mariani and Mraka. And they will put a tormentor in that place and will come to the place called Velblujd [Velbuzhd] and will assist him, but will not be able to help him out.”

And then Daniel said to the archangel: “Tell me, my Lord, for what reason are there so many sorrows all over the world?” And the archangel told me: “God loves Ishmael and He will give him power to hold the

¹⁰² Heliopolis in Syria.

¹⁰³ Rome.

¹⁰⁴ In the *Vision* the invading pagan nomads, Uzi, Petchenegs, and Coumans, are all “Ishmaelite.”

Roman land because of the sins of those who live there. The honor of the clerics will be taken away and sacrifices in the churches will dwindle. The clerics will be like lay people in these times. Then the Ishmaelites will perish and so will the power they held. Persida and Romania, and the other islands will be deserted. Those who live close to Jerusalem, Lauria, and Sikulia will blaspheme, saying: The Romans flee from our hands. The unknown is biding its time. They will come from our city, called Sredets, and will find here, by God's will, someone who will take in, at Medenik, crumbs of bread from the guardians. His name is Stolkuphaleo. And they will take him to Akrodun. Here they will anoint him to the tsardom and before that people will count him for dead. He will take the field against the Ishmaelites with great anger. Many people will meet the Ishmaelites in the place called Per-ton in the Hundred Hills, to the other side of Sredets. There will be a great battle there. There is a well with two mouths there. Then Roman blood will be mixed with that of the Ishmaelites and God will place the Ishmaelites in the hands of the tsar. And [he] will set free all his [subjects?] and will build naval weapons. [He] will send his messengers to the inner Roman provinces, will curb the blond beards, and will chase away Ishmael. Then that prophesy will be fulfilled: a lion and a dog will run after him. The tsar who will go out of Rome will come to the place called Vardia. Longii will resist at that place. When he inherits Rome, he will enter it, and will come to the place where there is a hidden vessel. And he will hit the copper threshing-floor where the vessel is, and by God's command it will be revealed. And he will tax the people. With that gold many men will go out of Rome and will take the same road to the Seven-peaked one. And no one on earth will resist him. God will be with him. Fear of this tsar will be spread to all three worlds. As they hear about him, two hundred heads will flee from the Seven-Peaked one to the inner provinces of the East. They will die an evil death.

Then the tenth horn will rise for a short time, about a year, and will fight with the Ethiopian tsar in the current month of August. The first day will come. Michael will take over the tsardom. Mountains will begin to move, the fish in the rivers will die. God will be with him for ever. And [he] will enter Thessaloniki from the West and will hold the tsardom with all his might and will trample upon his enemies with his feet. His scepter will reign in Thessaloniki. His wrath and his anger will be against those who fall out from God. The whole earth will be pacified, and there will be such a great joy that has never been before.

The magnates will be like kings and the poor like the rich. And [he] will make it known to the four corners of the earth. The pious and God-fearing men on earth will come together, wishing to avenge the blood of the innocent and the pollution of churches. There will be many sermons at the councils. The tsar will sit with them. The churches will be renewed with new images and their inner altars will be rebuilt. There will be no insults and insulted at that time. This scepter will end in peace and God will calm it down.

Another scepter will rise. In his time three tsars from Snake Gate will rise and the earth will shake before their faces. People will be scared and will flee to the mountains. Many will perish. There will be no one to bury the bodies of those who were not able to flee to the mountains. And they will drink the blood of beasts and eat polluted carrion. The earth will be corrupted by them. No one will be able to resist them during the time allotted for them, but it will end. God will send one of His arch-generals, Michael or Gabriel, and will destroy them. Then the Roman tsar will get on his feet and will move over to Jerusalem. And then the son of destruction will appear in all homes in Strumitsa, will be brought up in Bethsaida, and will reign in Capernaum. Woe to you, oh poor man and your offspring in you! And to you, Bethsaida, for he grew up in you! And to you, Capernaum, where he will reign! There will the son of destruction appear. The Roman tsar will go up to Golgotha, take off his crown, put it down on the cross, and pray to God. And [he] will stretch his hands up to the heavens and will hand over the Christian tsardom to God the Father. And the son of destruction will work miracles. Springs will dry out and the Egyptian sun will turn into blood. Three men will appear who have not tasted death: Enoch and Elijah. And the prince of destruction will fight with him and will overcome him and kill him. He will crucify Jesus our God on a tree, and will take his soul through the mouth.

Interpretation of the Prophet Daniel, *annals in the folk tradition, eleventh century* 116

This is the third apocryphal work in the cycle of popular historical accounts from the early period of the Byzantine rule. It documents the persistence of the idea of a Bulgarian state tradition after generations have passed since the conquest, and the non-abating hope in its restoration. The beginning implies that the work was a part of a larger cycle in which it might or might not have preceded by the version of the popular *Vision of Daniel* as extant today. Edition: Srechkovich, *Žbornik popa Dragolja*, 12–14.

As it was already said, from the beginning to the end, to the coming of the Antichrist, this is what reigned on earth. And this is how it will be. This secret will not be revealed to too many humans, for those who do not guard it will meet with an evil end. All this the archangel confessed to Daniel as he was carrying him into the clouds. And he wrote it on the star that flies and crosses over from midday to midnight. With these word he honored the tsars. God crowned seven tsars and pointed out where their tsardoms were. The first is Sinil in Asurek; the second Avarak in Rome; the third in Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon; the fourth, Chur among the Persians; the fifth, Alexander in Greece; the sixth, Romul in Rome; the seventh, Constantine in Constantinople.

And then the harsh beginning of the entire world will begin. Michael, the *khagan* of the Bulgarians, will rise.¹⁰⁵ He took over without violence the tsardom of the Bulgarians given to him. The brothers will rise against one another, city against city, and land against land.¹⁰⁶ Simeon will rule for thirty years and after him, Peter. Twelve tsars will rise after that. Each of them will begin to say: "I am the one." These are the tormentors. A howl will rise from the middle of the earth, in the most glorious cities. Their name is "Blonde Beards."¹⁰⁷ There will be fighting and much bloodshed. And there will be a great riot. The tsar of Sun City¹⁰⁸ will rise and will come with them and will seize all cities. He will take from them their gold and [their] notables. Then he will die for five years, and will lay dead that much, by God's command, and will be [re]born as a youth. And they will believe him dead. This tsar will rule for thirty-three years. His name is Michael. He will rise from Sun City and on the tenth year will set off all by himself. God will send an angel to wake him up and say to him: "Rise! God granted you to reign over all the nations for as long the sun will shine." He will mount a horse and take to the road all by himself, and he will come to Rome. They will not open [the gates] for him and will begin talking against him: "He wanders like a swindler." But he will strike the copper threshing-floor and it will disintegrate into dust. Then he will enter the

¹⁰⁵ Interesting attribution of the title *khagan*, with the meaning of "khan of khans" to Khan/Prince Boris-Michael, possibly influenced by the Byzantine legend of the good Emperor Michael.

¹⁰⁶ Allusion to the toppling of Vladimir/Rasate in 893?

¹⁰⁷ The Scandinavian mercenaries in Byzantine service in the first half of the eleventh century.

¹⁰⁸ Heliopolis in Syria; here the *Vision* follows the Byzantine legend of the good Emperor Michael.

city. Patriarchs, bishops, and deacons will gather. They will pile books together and will argue about the crown. A simple deacon will come and will prevail over in the dispute by saying the following: “This is the tsar.” He will take the books and will lay dead for five years. After he arises, he will go to the tsardom of Peter, in whose tomb the crown and the purple mantle are hidden. By God’s will the tomb will open. [He] will take the mantle that is there, and the scepter, and will put the crown on [his] head. Seeing the great discontent, the Romans will shower him with gold. Having gathered lances, he will begin to untie them and cut down [people?].

A hundred men and a hundred loads will set off from Rome. They will come to the southern part, to Glavinitsa, and will tame the “Blond Beards.” And three tormentors will rise from the East and will meet directly on Ovche Pole. They will slay the warriors from Skopie, and will go back to Studenets. Then again two detachments of Ishmaelites¹⁰⁹ will come here, and will spread over the entire Bulgarian land. And the *khagan* will set off, and will stop at Sredets. Two battles will be fought there. He will tell them at Bojana: “Give up looting and go back to your homes!” And the Ishmaelites will begin to say: “Let us loot this place and end the war.” And here, by Studenets, there are two gates. Much blood will be shed. His colts will be all bloodied. They will vanquish him and slay his soldiers. He will escape to Velbuzhd. Again will he gather poor men, priests, and deacons. The monks from the mountain of Vitosha, where many saints from the entire land are gathered, will set off with the cross against Ishmael. The patriarch will walk at their head. The Ishmaelites will get scared and will end the war. In Thessaloniki the *khagan* will rejoice. Then the Hungarians will come with a fearsome force to Thessaloniki. The third part will stay behind for baptism, for God loves Ishmael. And God will give him¹¹⁰ power, and the citizens of Thessaloniki will come out against the Hungarians and will slaughter them. They will drop their weapons and it will be a good year for this tsar. Life will be as never before. There will be [plenty of] everything. The holy churches will be renewed. Silver altars will be built. Soldiers will come back, some to Strumitsa, some to Glavinitsa. That land will be called the mother of all lands. From here people will spread to all lands. Such a joy it will be! The poor ones will be like *vlastelini* and the

¹⁰⁹ Most likely Petchenegs.

¹¹⁰ The *khagan*.

vlastelini like tsars. And the tsar, spreading the word, will be in God's image for three years.

And God will leave the earth. If they fear God's faith, [their] days will multiply. If they are evil, then their years will be cut short. Only one [man] of that lineage will remain. The land will be about to calm down and a pregnant woman will come. She will go out of the city, in the field, crying for her brother. As she cries there, she will give birth to a son. And he will rule the tsardom for one hundred and ninety years. His father will be of Bulgarian origin,¹¹¹ and his mother will be Greek. He will hold the tsardom in Pela. And as he bows three times, he will take off his crown and will say to the Lord: "I hand over the earthly tsardom and rest in peace." Then the son of destruction will be born in a hut. He will be brought up in Bethsaida and will return to Capernaum. Woe to you, when he is born in you! And to you, Bethsaida, where he was raised! Immediately, the son of destruction will appear in Pela and will rule the tsardom. He will climb to the place Kranievo, to Golgotha. And will place his crown on the cross. And will pray to God and the Father, and then the son of destruction will take power. [He] will work signs and miracles. The springs will turn into darkness. Two men will appear, Enoch and Elijah. Then the Antichrist will come. And these will come barefooted. [The Antichrist] will come not for life, and will be dressed like a charlatan. In the days of their prophesy the heavens will be shut up, not being able to take it any longer, as in the days of Elijah. The rivers will overflow with blood. The earth will suffer wounds as if wishing [them], if no one is listening to her. Here [he] will be slain with the words of the tormentor. His prophesy will end. The son of destruction will turn back and will murder her [?]. There will be those who will perish in Jerusalem; on their account the Antichrist will suffer, reign for four months, and kill a multitude. Then all the nations will rise from among the slain and get on their feet again. A voice speaking from heaven will be heard. [He] will go up to heaven in the image of God, above the clouds. There will be fear of God in everyone alive. For all ages glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—now and before! For all ages, amen!

¹¹¹ The *Vision* is strongly patriotic, attributing Bulgarian descent to the last emperor.

Tale of the holy prophet Isaiah of the future days, of the tsars, and of the Antichrist who will come, *twelfth century*. 117

The *Tale*, the last work of the “Bulgarian kind of history-writing” as Ivan Bozhilov dubbed this cycle of apocryphal historical compilations, is preserved in a fifteenth-century manuscript. It shares several features with the other three apocryphal annals: focus on the Bulgarian southwest, references to the uprising of Peter Delijan and the Normans, the reign of Emperor Michael IV as well as the Petcheneg invasions of Balkans beginning in the 1040s, and the vaguely preserved but indelible memory of Prince Boris-Michael. Edition: Anisava Miltenova and Milijana Kaimakamova, “Neizvestno starobalgarsko letopisno sachinenie ot XI vek,” *Palaeobulgarica* 4 (1983), 52–73.

The thirty-seventh tsar will rise; his name will be Gordie and his nickname, Chigochin.¹¹² He will come out of the City of the Sun [and will be] half-Christian, half-pagan. He will call together the entire land of Ishmael, the people from beyond the sea who will be called Fuscians with the nickname “wild asses,” and many famous sons of Agar, the Jewish lineage of Moses. They will conquer the whole land with the towns. They will reach the field called Sredets, where there is a well with two mouths. From Sredets they will begin to loot the lands to the east and west, north and south. No one will be able to resist them. Chigochin will devastate the Bulgarian and Greek lands for seven years like a torturer. Then the Greeks beyond the sea and the Bulgarians in the west will perish. They will survive only in the most famous cities, and in mountains and caves. In those days Vitosha and all of the well-known mountains will be covered in fog. The Holy Mountain¹¹³ will be wrapped with a cloud, and Constantinople will burn as if set on fire. Chigochin will torment the entire land¹¹⁴ and [the people] in these countries will begin to cry, saying: “Woe to us, brothers, we perish in woes!”

In the years of Tsar Chigochin the thirty-eighth tsar will come out of sun-down, from the land of Sar; his name will be Gagen and his nickname Odelijan.¹¹⁵ He will reign for five years and will be quiet and a brave warrior; the Christians will come to him wailing. He will resurrect as if he was born in the grave; one of his eyes will be put out. He

¹¹² Allusion to the Petcheneg invasions in the eleventh century and perhaps dim recollection of the several late Roman emperors by the name of Gordian.

¹¹³ Mount Athos.

¹¹⁴ In works of the period “land” stands for “nation.”

¹¹⁵ Peter Deljan, see # 114.

will gather the troops of the West and his red-colored mantle will be like a star. When he comes he will tame the “blond beards” and will go to the land of the Bulgarians. He will meet [in battle] the first army of Skopie on Ovche Polje, in Chigochin’s domain. He will defeat them and will take their weapons. Tsar Gagen will arm his troops and will set off against Chigochin. Then the Ishmaelites will meet him on the Field of Peas and will rout him; they will burn him down like the grass in the field and he will flee to the town of Zemlen. The Ishmaelites will spread all over and despoil the entire Bulgarian land.

Then Tsar Gagen will send to Tsar Chigochin [this message]: “Stop looting and go away together with the Ishmaelites; we will not leave you [in peace]!” Tsar Gagen will stay in Zemlen three months and pray to God until he gathers forty thousand troops. Then he will set off again against the Ishmaelites, at the place called Pettogomil. Much blood will be shed here. Gagen’s troops will be routed and he will flee to Pernik. Tsar Gagen will stay forty days in Pernik and will cry and pray to God. Then the warriors of the Lord will appear to him—patriarchs and bishops, monks and priests—and will go with him to the mountain called Vitosha where the holy fathers of the Bulgarian land reside.

Then a maiden will come out, a saintly one with a beautiful body: she will bring in the three hundred holy fathers. She will lead Tsar Gagen by the right hand and bless him. He will go against the Ishmaelites with the holy cross and there will be a great battle at the well with the two mouths. Much blood will be shed there. Tsar Gagen will annihilate the Ishmaelites; it will be as if the Lord smothered them with His invisible scepter. He will cut down Tsar Chigochin and will collect and give away so much booty that a three-year old colt will be covered with blood [carrying the burden]. Earlier he spent three years and three months in Sredets.

Then violent men will come over from the West, like shameless serpents, and will go to Ovche Polje with a large army. Tsar Gagen will go to Ovche Polje himself. Then the prudent mother will hold back her son, for these men will be mowed down like the grass in the fields. The people will say: “Woe to us, brothers, for the Bulgarian land perished completely: it is no larger now than an oak’s shade!” Tsar Gagen will leave Ovche Polje and go to Edrilo Polje. Another great slaughter will take place there. So much blood will be shed there that [the field] will no longer be called Edrilo Polje, but will be known far and wide as Bone’s Field. Tsar Gagen will fall there and a thousand thousands

men will fall with him. The people will say: “Woe to us, for the whole world perished!”

In these years the Ishmaelites will descend from the northern lands. Two parts of them will set off for the city of Thessaloniki; the third part will stay in their land and will convert for the Ishmaelites love the Lord. Then they will launch an attack on Thessaloniki. The citizens of Thessaloniki will come out against the Hungarians and will kill all of them. For three years will they burn their weapons instead of logs.

Then the thirty-ninth tsar will come on board ship from overseas. His name will be Simon the Most Wise and he will take over the Bulgarian land. He will enter New Jerusalem and will come to the Golden Gate and the treasury. Jerusalem will be in uproar and people will baptize each other. They will get to the Golden Gate. God will see their arrogance and madness and smother them. Here Simon the Most Wise will fall and will say: “New Jerusalem, their laws multiplied with you!” Simon will reign for six years.

After that the Lord will send down a tsar. He will be the fortieth tsar sent by God and his name will be Michael. He will reign over the entire universe. He will set off and will get to the throne where a maiden holds the crown of the pious and faithful Tsar Constantine. He will place the crown on his head and God will grant him fifty-three years to live. There will be much joy and delight and happy life under that tsar, such as has not been since the beginning of the world. In those days [Michael] will consecrate the holy churches and will build silver altars, and will give to the people knives in the place of weapons. He will turn the weapons into tools and the swords into sickles. Then the simple people will live like *bolijars*, the *bolijars* like *voevodi*, and the *voevodi* like tsars. People will spread all over the land. In those days only the dead will be idle. In those years of Tsar Michael one vine will yield a measure of wine, one sheaf, a measure of wheat; the fleece of one sheep will yield a whole bundle of wool; there will be much honey and butter. In those years people and beasts will multiply. There will be neither death, nor war, nor robberies.

In these years an old woman will come from the east, another from the west, and they will meet at Likitsa. There they will find a human head and will sit down to mourn over it for three days and three nights, saying: “Oh, beloved head, get up, for life is blessed, but there is no one to live it!” They will stand up and walk four *poprishta* and will get to the place where the earth spat out its bounty. They will sit

down there for another seven days of mourning, saying: "Oh, beloved children, why did you so cruelly destroy yourself? There is plenty of life, but there is no one to live it: humankind diminished!" In those years there will be abundance in everything and for that reason there will be joy and delight.

In those days Michael will get on his horse and go to Rome over the sea with a sword, and will tell the Romans: "Open the gates for me!" They will tell him: "We will not open the gates because you are a deceiver!" He will swing the sword but will not strike and the copper gates will turn into ashes. The Roman bishops, monks, patriarchs, and priests will gather with their books and will make the sign of the cross over the royal crowns. A simple deacon will appear, and will defeat them in the dispute, saying: "This one has to reign where the sun turns around earth." They will snatch a book and will strike the deacon over the head. He will die and will lay dead for three days. On the third day God will grant soul to the deacon. The Lord will tell him: "Stand up and go to the monastery of the holy apostle Paul; on his grave you will find a crown of red stone and an immaculate shirt. Place it on the head of Michael."

When the Romans see the great fear and the great honors accorded him [i.e., Tsar Michael] they will begin to talk and will shed gold as if it were wheat on the threshing floor: a whole heap will be made. Michael will get on his horse and will ride all over the world for eleven years, propagating the faith and the law with his sword. Then he will return to his land, called the New Jerusalem, and will tame the "blond beards." He will have fifty-three of those years.

In the time of Tsar Michael a very beautiful bird will appear and will show up at the city walls of Constantinople. It will then transform into a nun. In the reign of Tsar Michael the Antichrist, will be born, the Enemy of God. He will be more handsome than the entire humankind and will be very smart, and his eyes will be like stars.

Then Michael will go to his throne and will place his crown on the cross and will yield up his spirit to God. The angels will get his body secretly and will carry it up to Heaven. Then the Antichrist will begin to torture the Christians cruelly: he will wrap their intestines around oak trees, cast them into thorny bushes, and burn them with blazing flames, asking: "Where are those who believed in the Scriptures and the holy cross?" All that is flesh will cry out to God. The Lord will hear the wail of his faithful and the Lord will send the prophets Elijah

and Enoch to overcome the Antichrist for he would seduce the whole world. In those days the Jewish Kingdom will rise and the Christians will diminish. In that time those who are the last will be first and the first will be last.

Elijah will argue with the Antichrist, telling him: “You are the seducer.” He will rage with hatred and will make a copper altar and will place Elijah and Enoch on it and will slash their throats, as the prophet David said: “Then your heifers will be placed on the altar.” Then the Lord will call the holy cross, the apostles, the Gospels, and the chosen ones who have pleased God, and the holy churches, and the graves of the baptized ones from all over the earth. The Lord will send them against Jerusalem, and will set fire to earth. The earth will burn with the mountains, the mountains and the houses, as the prophet David said: “[He] will touch the mountains and they will rise; the sea will boil like a pot and will burn down like the Northern Sea.” In three years everything will burn down; only the place from which Jordan springs out will remain.

After that the Lord will send out the four principal winds to spread the ashes all over the land. Then the Lord will create two springs, whiter than snow, one for the east and the other for the west. Their waters will flow all over the land. The earth will become as flat as a sheet, more beautiful than this world, and seven times whiter. The earth will rest for three years and then the earth will cry out to the Lord, saying: “Take care of me, Master, because I am resting for many years and I am like a seven year old girl, purer than the creation. I am purified from any impurity.” Then the Lord will descend from Heaven to the place called Houki with great force and glory. The holy churches will gather and will shine like stars in their spots. Many angels and archangels will come together in the thousands, twelve millions altogether, carrying the throne of God, and will shine seven times stronger than the sun. The Lord Himself will appear in the sky to judge the quick and the dead in person. Archangel Michael will blow a sheep horn and the twelve archangels will follow suit. Those who had been sleeping for ages will wake up, as the prophet said: “You will send Your Spirit and they will build; You will renew the face of earth.” They will rise as if from sleep, walk upon the earth, and recognize each other. The angels will come and separate the good from the evil. The good will be placed on the right side; the sinners on the left [side]. The Tsar will say to those on the right: “Come, blessed of my Father, and inherit the

Kingdom of Heaven which has been prepared for you.” Then He will say to those on the left: “Go away from me, you damned ones, [go] into the eternal fire!”

Then the raging Antichrist will stand on the left side together with the Jews who will tremble because they used to say: “Let His blood be upon us and upon our children!” The angels will terribly and mercilessly drive them into the outer darkness, as the prophet said: “The memory of them will vanish with a crash and the Lord will be forever.” Then the Lord will say to the sinners: “Oh you wretches, how come you did not recognize the years of Satan nor did you believe my prophets? In his first year [there was] plenty of grain and wine; in the second year you will find not a handful of grain nor a cup of wine on the entire earth. His years will be cut short because of the chosen ones. His reign will last three years. He will cause the three years to appear like three months; the months to appear like three weeks; the weeks to appear like three days; the days to appear like three hours; the three hours to appear like three minutes; and the three minutes to appear like one moment. Did you not realize, lawless enemies, that you have been seduced and turned away from God?”

Then the Lord will take the holy cross and the Gospel and the Apostle and will judge the twelve tribes. The reign of the Lord will be endless and there will be no death, no weddings, and no marriages. There will be no young people, no old people, and no babies, but everyone will be of the same age and appearance, everyone will be thirty-years old. There will be no jealousy and no envy but only perfect love and joy in the name of God, our Savior.

Varia

118 Of All Things, *eleventh-century apocryphal account.*

This curious account with a strong philosophical and naturalistic streak is dated in the early eleventh century and has no direct parallel in the known Byzantine works in the genre. The author combines folk elements with itinerant literary motifs to cater to the taste of an audience that craved basic instruction in the natural world and did not really care either about the orthodoxy of its contents or the quality of its “science.” The account is extant in copies from the fifteenth century on, mostly in Russian versions. Edition: Nikolai Tikhonravov, *Pamjatniki otrechennoi russkoj literaturuj*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1863), 347–50.

This is about the celestial sphere: Lord bless. The celestial sphere is larger than that of the earth and that of the earth is larger than that

of the moon. Three hundred angels take down the crown of the sun. [Another] three hundred angels rotate the circle of thunder. All these are alive: the sun, the moon, the stars, and the winds. The angels, however, are invisible and incorporeal. No one in the world has seen the true essence of the angel except the Mother of God who saw Gabriel.

The sun and the moon are not in the sky but in the air. There are twelve gates to the East and twelve gates to the West. The sun travels along twelve roads across the ocean and across the air. During the day it moves through the air, during the night, on the ocean. It flies low [and carefully] to avoid getting wet; nevertheless, it plunges in exactly three times. It is said in the scripture: “There is a cock in the sea: its head reaches the sky and the sea is up to its knees.” When the sun washes in the ocean, its gets rough and when the cock feels the waves of the ocean, it says: “Kukurigu!” Then all the cocks in the world begin to sing at one and the same time. This is interpreted as “Lord Giver of Light, give light to the world.” The sun washes the ocean off and the ocean washes off the sun. All the waters come from the ocean.

The celestial sphere is like a heap; the earthly [sphere] has four corners. The distance from the one end of the earth to the other is as much as it is to the sky and to the water on which the earth floats. This water has no bottom and no end. There is earth [on the other side] of the ocean as well; there is Paradise and the torments [i.e., Hell]. In the middle of that earth there is a great abyss, very deep. That earth looks like half of a shield: its broad side is toward the sea, one of its corners is Paradise, and the other is the torments. Paradise is like a cross. There is a pillar made of diamond in the ocean. Its tip reaches the sky. The devil Satan is bound to it, but of him I will not say much. I will talk about the things with which we began.

God created everything in five days. On the fifth day God commanded the sea to produce fish and birds of various kinds, and the earth He commanded to produce reptiles and four-legged beasts, and commanded that fruit grow on earth. The devil was brought down before the creation of Adam and not as the ignoramuses say, because he did not bow to Adam. That was not the reason for the fall of Satan. He fell from the glory of God because of his pride. On the sixth day God looked down to earth and saw that what He had created was good. And God the Almighty Father told the Son and the Holy Spirit: “Let us create man in our image and likeness. He will rule over everything that exists on earth.” He took earth from the ground and created Adam, and made Eve out of Adam’s rib, and then humanity multiplied. [He

commanded them] to live in Paradise but after they sinned they had to leave Paradise. God created all that in five days. On the sixth day God created man. On the seventh day [He] did not create anything. Just like for man seven days passed so for God seven thousand years will pass. God created the rainbow after the flood.

After Adam's fall from Paradise the devil began tormenting humankind and sending souls to Hell. The man-loving God did not despise the creature of His hand, the humankind that the devil tormented, and sent His only Son to set humankind free from the devil. The Son of God came down to earth and was born of the Holy Spirit [and] the Virgin Maria by the will of the Father. He was crucified, was laid in the grave and resurrected. He descended into Hell and bound Satan, and announced it to the people and ascended to the Father. He will come back at the Second Coming to try the quick and the dead and to give everyone according to their deeds. Glory to Him in all ages. Amen.

119 *Marginal notes to the Bitolja Codex, late twelfth century.*

This late twelfth-century codex from southwestern Bulgaria (at Stulp, close to modern Bitolja, Macedonia) is a transliteration of collections written in the Glagolitic script during the tenth century. Its contents are standard monastic fare, but the scribe, the grammarian George, left numerous marginal notes that illustrate both the conditions of the arduous and spiritually rewarding labor in the scriptorium and the determination of the grammarian as well as that of many modest and illiterate Bulgarians to help preserve and uphold their native literary tradition. Edition: Hristo Kodov, *Opis na slavjanskite rakopisi v bibliotekata na Balgarskata Akademija na Naukite* (Sofia, 1969).

I, George, the sinful one, wrote on a plate in Stulp in "Sveti Vrachove,"¹¹⁶ on the thirtieth day of December. Remember me, my brothers, for my hands freeze. Here I wrote, here I ate, and here I slept without fire.

God have mercy on the son of Piros, who brought me two sheets from hare's skin on the second day of January.

Bless me, brothers, for I suffered much while writing during the night even though in a rough and incomplete manner.

This paper¹¹⁷ was brought by Peter and Ioan the smith, and I wrote as much as I could before they took away the *triod*. Forgive us, brothers, all of us, and the priest George of Vapi.

¹¹⁶ The monastery of St St Kosmas and Damian.

¹¹⁷ The word is *chartija*, the modern Bulgarian term for paper, but the codex was written on parchment.

Tell me, my sinful soul: don't you desire to see the end of this book as much as the sailor the end of the sea, the sick, health, and the poor, food and clothing for his body? Remember me, brothers, and God [will remember] you.

And how much I suffered from cold all that day on the fifth of February, and how much from a toothache. . . Remember me, the grammarian George, and God [will remember] you.

Remember, brothers, John, the son-in-law of Emnostina, who gave me unripe cheese and milk.

I wrote [the ligatures for] “peace” and “hands” and “hate” together; forgive me.

Notary record for the sale of a child, eleventh-twelfth centuries.

120

The record was made as a marginal note in a Gospel now in the Vatican Library, MS Cod. Vatic. Gr. 353 f. 31a. The language masking the sale of the child by its mother as exchange of “gifts” is characteristic of the time and is well-documented practice in Western Latin sources. The location cannot be identified. Edition: Ivan Dujchev, “Balgarski spogodben act ot epohata na vizantijskoto vladichestvo,” *Izvestija na nauchnata akademija*, 3 (1966), 185–190 reprinted in his *Balgarsko srednovekovie* (Sofia, 1972), 209–15.

I, Dobrina, gave my child to the priest as a gift, and [got from him] a field at *Dobri gosti* near Drazhil's fields. Neither my children nor anyone of my clan should calumniate with the priest, also because he gave him a gift. . . [lacuna]. For he gave me as a gift seven elbows of cotton fabric, five [elbows] of linen, and three cables of wheat.

Inscription on amulet with apocryphal prayer, twelfth century (?).

121

The prayer on this lead plate, the longest known at present from inscriptions, is a curse against evil spirit or *nezhit* (un-live) commonly appearing in apocryphal texts from the late medieval period. Edition: Peter Garena, Ivan Iliev, “Novootkrit starobalgarski nadpis-zaklinanie ot Kardzalijsko,” in *Cultural Texts of the Past: Mediators, Symbols, and Ideas*. Vol. 2. *Texts of Cult and Religion* (Sofia, 2005), 150–57.

...Jesus came from the Seventh Heaven from...

...the evil spirit [*nezhit*] came from the Red Sea and...

to his dwelling [?] Jesus met [him] and said to him: “Where are you going brother?” And the evil spirit said: “I am coming here, to enter the head of the human, to suck up his brains, dry out his eyelids, cover his back, deafen his ears, seal his eyes, twist his lips, and stamp his nose...sickness of the head day and night.” And Jesus told him: “Oh brother, with...

evil spirit, go to the mountain and enter the head of a deer and...
...because you bore all suffering with patience. Stay there
and wait until the sky and the earth
come to end. Fear God, who sits on
the throne of the cherubs, until
the Lord come to mete out justice to the universe. I am casting a spell
on you,
raving spirit, master of every affliction, I curse you
...you, evil spirit, go away from God.” Lord God. Earth and sky.
102 [200?] years. Now, and for ever, and for all ages. Amen.

PART FOUR

RESTORATION, EXPANSION, DECLINE, AND CONQUEST:
SECOND BULGARIAN TSARDOM, 1185–1396

Seals and Rings

122 *Seals of Bulgarian tsars.*

Editions: Nikola Mushmov, *Monetite i pechatite na balgarskite tsare* (Sofia, 1924), 158–64; Todor Gerasimov, “Falshivi pechatit na balgarski tsare ot X, XIII, i XIV vek” *Archeologia* (1970): 2, 32–43; idem, “Molivdovul na tsar Boril nameren v Preslav,” *Vekove* (1970): 1, 80–82; idem, “Sceaux bulgares des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles,” *Byzantinoslavica* (1960): 1, 62–74. See now Jordanov, *Korpus*, 99–100, 101–2, 105, 110, 117–8, 122, 126–8.

(r): Asen tsar of the Bulgarians¹

(v): St Demetrius

(r): Kaloyan tsar of the Bulgarians²

(v): St Demetrius

(r): Kaloyan tsar of the Bulgarians

(v): (image of the Virgin)

(r): Boril tsar of the Bulgarians³

(v): (image of St Demetrius)

(r): Ioan Asen tsar of Bulgarians and Greeks⁴

(v): (image of St Demetrius)

(r): Micho tsar (legend around a ruler on horseback)⁵

(half of a bronze seal-die)

(r): Konstantin in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of the Bulgarians Asen⁶

(v): (image of Archangel Michael)

¹ Asen I (1187–1197).

² Kaloyan (1197–1207).

³ Boril (1207–1218).

⁴ Ioan Asen II (1218–1241).

⁵ Micho Asen (1257).

⁶ Constantin Tich Asen (1257–1277).

(r): Michael Asen⁷

(v): [empty]

(r): Ioan Alexander tsar of the Bulgarians⁸

(v): (image of St Nicolas)

(r): Ioan Alexander in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians

(v): St John of Rila

(r): This gold-sealed charter [chrysobul] belongs to the holy father John of Rila

(v): Ioan Shishman in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians⁹

123 *Ring seals.*

Editions: *SBK*, 2, 291; Valo Valev, “Kalojanovijat prasten ili nadpisat na Ioan Asen II,” *Istoricheski Pregled* 3 (1974), 86–91; *AI*, 2, 187, 190, 205, 219; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 138–44.

+ Peter *pinkerni* cousin of the tsar

+ Slav *stolnik* of the tsar

+ Vitomir’s ring

+ Radoslav’s ring

+ Kaloyan’s ring

+ Besar’s ring

+ *Sevast* Hinat

+ *Sevast* Hodor

+ Dobroslav’s ring

+ Sjan’s ring

+ Tagchi sword-bearer

+ Ring-seal of *Hzriz*

124 *Seal of Besarion, Patriarch of Tarnovo.*

Besarion was the last Bulgarian patriarch who kept to the union with the Roman church established under Tsar Kaloyan in 1204. Graffiti on a column in the church of the St Peter and Paul in Veliko Tarnovo refers to his death:

⁷ Michael Shishman Asen (1322–1330).

⁸ Ioan Alexander Asen (1331–1371).

⁹ Ioan Shishman (1371–1395).

“Patriarch Besarion presented himself [to God] in the month of September,” most likely September 1234. Editions: Todor Gerasimov, “Oloven pečat na tarnovskija patriarch Visarion,” *Izvestija na okraznija istoricheski muzei-Veliko Tarnovo*, 2 (1964), 46; *AI*, 2, 179; Jordanov, *Korpus*, 130–31.

+ Visarion, by God’s grace patriarch of the Bulgarians.

Seal of Patriarch Simeon, most likely 1340s.

Patriarch Simeon is mentioned by name in the Synodikon of the Bulgarian church. He was the ranking church dignitary who in 1346 placed the imperial crown on the head of the Serbian King Stephen Dushan. He is also mentioned in a marginal note to a copy of the works of John Chrysostomos commissioned by him in 1347. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 132.

(r): (Ascension of Christ)

(v): Simeon by God’s grace patriarch of all Bulgarians

Political Treaties and Diplomatic Correspondence

Correspondence between Tsar Kaloyan, Prince Belota, Archbishop Basil, and Pope Innocent III, 1199–1204 (excerpts).

In the final years of the twelfth century Tsar Kaloyan (1197–1207) opened negotiations with the Roman Curia to obtain formal recognition of his status and independence for the Bulgarian Church. The negotiations brought incomplete results for both sides: Kaloyan received a royal but not an imperial title, though he pretended he did get the later; and his chief priest was ordained an archbishop, not a patriarch. Innocent III, for his part, had to accept a uniatic Bulgarian Church that paid only lip service to Rome. The union persisted until 1235, supported by archbishops who took their oath to the Pope seriously and the political situation in the Balkans. The union was abolished by Ioan Asen II in 1235. Edition: Ivan Dujchev, “Prepiskata na papa Inokentij s bulgarite. Uvod, tekst, i belezhki,” *Godishnik na Sofijskija Universitet Kliment Ohridski, Istoriko-Filologicheski Fakultet* vol. 37 (1942), 21–66. Partial translation into English: *MB*, 217–35.

[January, 1202] Letter of Kaloyan, Lord of the Bulgarians and the Vlachs, sent to the Lord Pope Innocent III and translated from Bulgarian into Greek and then from Greek into Latin.¹⁰

¹⁰ According to Ivan Dujchev, the editor of the correspondence, the translation was done by Dominic, the bishop of Brindisi.

To the respected and most holy father and supreme first priest. I, Kaloyan, emperor of Bulgarians and Vlachs,¹¹ wish you joy and health. We let it be known to Your Holiness that we received your most holy letter brought to us by the pious archpresbyter of Brindisi and we consider it more precious than any gold or any kind of precious stone. For this reason we gave many thanks to the Almighty God who, on account of His indescribable goodness visited us, His unworthy servants, turned His face toward our humility and reminded us about our blood and the homeland from which He hails. Now Your Holiness, the good shepherd and head of all true Christians, desiring to gather together the children of the holy apostolic and Catholic see found us, who are far away bodily. And even though my brothers¹² who now rest in peace wanted long time ago to send messengers to Your Holiness they were not able to reach you on account of our many enemies. We tried the same and once, twice, and a third time sent envoys to You but could not bring to a successful end what we desired. Now, seeing that Your Holiness deemed it worthy to send a messenger to our tsardom we, like proper and cherished children, send to Your Mercifulness, like to a most loved and desired father, the pious pre-ordained bishop of Branichevo Vlasius, our trusted presbyter, along with your messenger, the *archpresbyter* of Brindisi, who will bring to You, the spiritual father and supreme first priest of our country, the expression of our thankfulness, friendship, and obedience. Most holy father, you instructed us in your holy letter to let you know what we wish from the Roman Church. Our tsardom requests from the Apostolic Church that we are confirmed as if with maternal affection by the Roman Church. In the first place, we, as a beloved son, desire from our mother, the Roman Church, the tsar's crown and dignity, the same as our old emperors had.¹³ For we found it written down in our books that one of these

¹¹ The Bulgarian original must have had "tsar," which was translated in Greek as *basileus* and then in the corresponding Latin form as *imperator*. The presence of Vlachs in Kaloyan's title has given rise to many, mostly unfounded, speculations that the tsar, and his entire family as well as the people he led had been ethnic Vlachs. While there must have been Vlachs in Kaloyan's domain, particularly in the mountains, and he certainly wanted to use this to underscore affinity with the West, it is an undisputable fact that Kaloyan, his brothers, and the entire Asenid dynasty perceived themselves as Bulgarians, heirs and even descendents of the Bulgarian tsars of the First Tsardom, and as leaders of a people who called themselves Bulgarians.

¹² Peter II (1185–1197) and Asen I (1187–1195), Kaloyan's elder brothers.

¹³ Kaloyan refers to the tsars of the First Tsardom, Peter (927–970) and Samuel (997–1014).

was Peter, another Samuel, and there were others who were before them.¹⁴ Now, if Your Holiness deigns to fulfill that wish of ours, whatever you decide to have accomplished in our tsardom it will be done for the glory of God and the Roman Church. Do not wonder why your messenger did not return more speedily to you. We harbored some suspicions about him, for many had come to our tsardom that planned to deceive us. We do know, however, how to guard ourselves well against anyone. However, we received the testimony of Pretextate on his behalf and were reassured on his account.¹⁵ But if you, most holy father, deem it appropriate, send us messengers of high rank, as you informed us in your letter. Send with them this one as well, so that we rest assured about both the first and the second delegation. May God give you many years.

[1202] Letter of Prince Belota to Pope Innocent III

I, Prince¹⁶ Belota, a very great sinner, offer my respects to Your Great Holiness, glorified by the entire world. I would like to let you know that we were very pleased when your messenger, the *archpresbyter* Dominic, came to us and informed us about Your Holiness and your prayers. In the name of God I welcome Your Great Holiness and beg Your Holiness' prayers and blessing in order that I, my wife, my children, and my entire kin can partake of the grace of the Roman Church. Let the first one to pass through our land bring us a letter and blessings from you so that we are confirmed in your prayers.¹⁷

[May 1203] Letter of Tsar Kaloyan to Pope Innocent III

Kaloyan, emperor of the Bulgarians, to the Most Holy Lord and patriarch, the Roman Pope of the Christian faith from East to West.

I am sending you this message and I will rejoice if my envoy finds you healthy and happy along with those who are with you and your kin and friends. I am healthy by God's and the blessed Virgin's good

¹⁴ Unfortunately, although there is no reason to doubt Kaloyan's words, the texts he refers to has not been preserved. The language can be interpreted to mean that the ancient tsars had received their crowns from Rome.

¹⁵ There was an influential Roman family with that name.

¹⁶ The Slavic term is *knjaz*, formerly denoting a tribal chief; in the contexts it refers to a territorial lord.

¹⁷ Belota, who must have been a local potentate somewhere in northwestern Bulgaria, is not mentioned in another source.

works and through the prayers of the holy apostles Peter and Paul and through your holy prayers.

I, Kaloyan, emperor of the Bulgarians, understand that you have been given by God the power to bind and unbind like the blessed apostle Peter to whom the Lord said: “Whatever you bind on earth, etc.,” so God gave this grace to you too. For that reason, what you bind is bound, and what you unbind, is unbound. I let Your Holiness know that six years have passed since I sent to you,¹⁸ once, twice, and a third time, but my messengers could not pass through to Your Holiness, deliver my words, and bring me back your consolation. Then God inspired Your Holiness to send to me the *archpresbyter* of Brindisi Dominic, from whom I understood that you have not forgotten me, your servant. I honored him as a man of yours and gave him a letter to take to Your Holiness but only God knows whether he was able to deliver it or not. Since the Greeks found out about this, the patriarch and the emperor¹⁹ sent to me [saying]: “Come to us, and we will crown you as a tsar and will install a patriarch for you, for there cannot be tsardom without patriarchy.” But I did not want to do that. On the contrary, I turned to you, for I wish to be yours and St Peter’s servant. Let it be known to Your Holiness that I sent to you an archbishop with all kinds of appurtenances and riches, silk fabrics, wax, silver, horses and mules, so that he can honor Your Holiness in the place of me, your servant. I beg you, through the prayers of the blessed apostle Peter and your holy prayers, to send me cardinals whom you have commanded to crown me as tsar and install a patriarch in my country, so that I remain a servant of yours for as long as I am alive.

[August 1203] Addition of Archbishop Basil to the Pope

Besides, let it be known to Your Holiness that I, Archbishop Basil, was coming to you with all that wealth to honor Your Holiness and I was able to reach to Drach,²⁰ where I found the envoys of Count Gautier²¹ who rejoiced greatly with me and made arrangements to cross over [the Adriatic Sea] with me. But the Greek who was with them, after

¹⁸ This reference dates the beginning of Kaloyan’s reign in 1197.

¹⁹ Patriarch John Kamateros (1199–1206) and Emperor Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203).

²⁰ Dyrachium, or Durazzo in Albania.

²¹ Gautier de Brienne, a crusading lord from Champagne who did not take part in the Fourth Crusade.

conferring with the duke of Drach, did not allow me to cross with them, asserting that if I crossed it would displease the emperor [of Byzantium]. When the archdeacon and the Latin priests in Drach heard that they too advised me not to cross lest I perish and my stuff with me. Because of this I sent to you [two] noble men loyal to the tsar, the constable Sergius and the presbyter Constantine, who are ordered to tell you the truth. May God inspire you to do the right thing in this affair.

[September 10, 1203] Golden bull of Tsar Kaloyan with formal oath of submission to the supremacy of the Roman Church

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen. Because it pleased our Lord Jesus Christ to elevate me as Lord and Emperor of all Bulgaria and Vlachia, I made an inquiry in the writings and books of our forefathers and in the laws of our predecessors, the tsars now resting in blessed peace, from where did they receive the tsardom of Bulgaria and the confirmation of their tsar's [title], crowns for their heads, and the blessing of a Patriarchy. After a diligent inquest we found in their writings that these tsars of the Bulgarians and the Vlachs, our now resting in blessed peace predecessors²² Simeon, Peter, and Samuel, received crowns for their tsardom and the blessing of a Patriarchy by the most holy Roman Church of God and the Apostolic See of the prince of the apostles Peter. Hence my tsardom, too, desired to receive blessing and confirmation in the tsardom through a crown for the head of our tsardom and blessing for a Patriarchy from the Roman Church, the Apostolic See, the prince of the apostles Peter, and from our most holy and father and patriarch of the universe, Pope Innocent the Third. No matter who the Lord pope would be that will give and grant the blessing for a Patriarchy and its prerogatives over the city of my tsardom Tarnov, to place and ordain archbishops, metropolitans, and bishops, as well as other ecclesiastical and priestly offices, my tsardom grants them to have the fullest power in everything that belongs to the domain of my tsardom.²³ Of course, the ecclesiastical properties in our entire tsardom, and my patriarch, metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, and priests will be under the power of the Roman Church and will keep the

²² Here Kaloyan asserts not just the continuity in the Bulgarian state tradition but also the direct link with the last dynasty of the First Tsardom. His claim cannot be verified and is most likely a propaganda device.

²³ I.e., Kaloyan declares the union, with the caveat that the Bulgarian Church will retain its customs.

law, the customs, and the rules, which were kept by the now resting in blessed peace tsars of all Bulgaria and Vlachia, those predecessors of ours in the past, and [are kept] by us as well, who are now following in the same manner in their footsteps. My tsardom signs this golden bull in confirmation of this, that we will never desert the Roman Church, the Apostolic See, and the prince of the apostles Peter. That is, neither my tsardom, nor the princes of my tsardom will desert it, but I will be the chosen and beloved son of the Holy Apostolic Roman See of the Prince of the apostles Peter. And if in the future my tsardom happens to obtain more territories of Christians or pagans these will be under the power and command of the same sacred and apostolic Roman See. So that this golden bull is deemed true and without suspicion, my tsardom placed it in the hands of the most honorable man John, messenger of the most holy Roman See and *capelan* of the Lord Pope. It was signed by our pious and God-elevated tsardom in the year 6712 [1203–1204], seventh *indiction*.

[September 10, 1203] Letter of the Bulgarian archbishops and bishops to Pope Innocent III

Inclining our necks under the right hand of his Lordship, the most holy father and lord, the Lord Pope, [we offer a] bow with lowered heads and bent knees.

In the first place, the sinner and humble metropolitan of the most holy Church of Velbuzhd, Anastasius; after him, the sinner and humble metropolitan of the great Church of Preslav, Sava; the bishop, although unworthy, of the most holy Church of the Mother of God in Skopie, Marin; the humble bishop of the most holy bishopric of Prizren, Abraham; the sinner and humble bishop of the most holy Church of the blessed and all-glorious great martyr Prokopius in Nish, Kirik; the unworthy bishop and sinner of the most holy Church of the Mother of God in Vidin, Klement.

We all beg most humbly our only shepherd and universal father and lord to favor us with the *palium* [that marks] the fullness of the priestly office so that we, throughout the days of our lives, do stop praying for Your Magnificence.

[After September 10, 1203] Letter of Tsar Kaloyan to Pope Innocent III

To the most holy lord and universal pope who sits on the throne of the blessed Peter and lord father of my tsardom, Innocent III, Pope of the Apostolic See and the Roman Church, teacher of the entire world.

I hope in God, the Savior of humanity, that Your Holiness is well and very well, along with all cardinals of the Holy Roman Church who sit around the throne of Your Holiness. Let it be known to Your Great Holiness that your and the Roman Church's son, the tsar of all Bulgarians and Vlachs, and all princes of my tsardom are well thanks to God and your holy prayers.

Many times did my tsardom send my messengers to Your Holiness, but they were not able to go through to Your Holiness. They were not able to cross over because those who were not in peace with my tsardom guarded the routes. After that, this past month of June, my tsardom sent our archbishop and [the head] of all Bulgaria and the all-encompassing holy Church of Tarnov, now ordained as Primate and Archbishop of all Bulgaria and Vlachia, called Basil, who, after he arrived in Drach, was not allowed to cross over to Your Holiness so that Your Holiness can fulfill the desire of my tsardom, according to the customs of my predecessors and ancestors, the tsars of the Bulgarians and Vlachs, Simeon, Peter, and Samuel and all other Bulgarian tsars. However, with God's help and with the assistance of Your Holiness' prayers the current messenger of the Apostolic See and the high throne of the prince of the apostles and the holy and universal Roman Church, the *capelan* John, came to me and brought me a *palium* by Your Holiness command and that of the Apostolic See. With that *palium* he adorned the above mentioned archbishop and elevated him to the position of Primate and Archbishop of all Bulgaria and Vlachia, bringing to my tsardom Your Holiness' letters and narrating everything that Your Holiness had ordered. My heart overflowed with joy, for God and Your Holiness granted me what my tsardom had requested. And I beg and plead with Your Holiness to fulfill this desire of my tsardom [as well]: send a shepherd's crosier to gather the flock and the other things that befit a patriarch, and elevate the current archbishop into a patriarch of this holy and great Church of Tarnov, the first city of Bulgaria, so that by the command of Your Holiness this Church has a patriarch forever, even after the death of the present patriarch. Because it will be so difficult, due to the great distance and wars between people, after the death of a patriarch to reach the Roman Church, let it be granted to

the Church of Tarnov to have the right to elect and ordain its patriarch, so that this country is not left without blessing, due to the lack of a patriarch, and your ordainment is incomplete, and so that there is no sin on Your Holiness. Now we request that on Your Holiness' command chrism be prepared for the baptism of Christians in the holy and great Church of Tarnov. Let it be known to Your Holiness that when the Byzantines find out that we were blessed by Your Holiness they will not give us chrism. There is another thing that I request from Your Holiness. Send cardinals to my tsardom, either the one who came to me or another one from the Apostolic See, and give them a crown and a scepter blessed by the Apostolic See and the prince of the apostles, and send a privilege, sealed with gold, like this one, so that these are kept forever in the Church of Tarnov; all these they [the cardinals] should give to my tsardom. However, let the current messenger, the bishop of Branichevo Blasius, see all the things mentioned above that are to be brought to my tsardom from Your Holiness, so that he can bring to me what you will write down with your hand. And if Your Holiness fulfills all this, I will consider myself, together with all the people of my tsardom, Bulgarians and Vlachs, a beloved son of the Orthodox and Holy Roman Church.

As for the issue of the frontier between Hungary [on the one hand] and Bulgaria and Vlachia [on the other], I leave it to the judgment of Your Holiness to resolve it honestly and justly, so that there is no sin on Your Holiness' soul and that my tsardom has the right over Bulgaria and Vlachia, just like the king of Hungary has the right over Hungary, and the killing of Christians between us and him cease. However, let it be known to Your Holiness that the five bishoprics which the king of Hungary attacked and seized and their ecclesiastical rights belong to my tsardom.²⁴ Now these bishoprics are suppressed: is it just for this to happen? Whatever the current messenger of my tsardom, the bishop of Branichevo Blasius, tells Your Holiness take it as the truth, because he will speak in my name.

I sent to Your Holiness three double *examitae*²⁵ and a gold cup, and four pounds of *perperi*²⁶ and three silver goblets, and a silver binding for a book. Kaloyan, Emperor of Bulgaria.

²⁴ The bishoprics of Nish, Branichevo, Belgrade, Srem, and Rashka.

²⁵ Liturgical vestments.

²⁶ Gold coins.

[1204] Oath of Basil, Archbishop of Tarnov

I, the Archbishop of Tarnov, Primate of all Bulgaria and Vlachia, from this hour and in the future, will be loyal and obedient to the blessed Peter, to the holy Roman Apostolic See, and to my Lord Pope Innocent and his Catholic successors. I will not be part of an affair or a council or an agreement that will cause them to loose their live or limb or be captured or robbed. I will not reveal, consciously and to their detriment, advice which they have entrusted to us. I will strive to prevent any harm against them of which I am aware. If I cannot avert it, I will inform them as soon as possible. I will defend as I much as I am able the Roman Papacy and the honor, dignity, and interests of the Apostolic See against any man alive for as long I keep my office. If called upon to attend a council I will appear, unless I am hindered by a canonical obstruction. I will visit the Apostolic See every four years personally or through a representative of mine, unless they wish to free me [from the obligation]. I will accept loyally any messenger of the Apostolic See of whom I am certain that he is a messenger, and I will help him in his needs. When I ordain some of my subjects as a bishop, I will demand that he takes an oath to be permanently obedient and to honor the first priest of Rome and the Roman Church. Furthermore, when we crown someone as tsar of the Bulgarians and the Vlachs, according to the permission given to me and my successors by the Apostolic See, I will request as a guarantee an oath that he will be loyal and obedient to the one who at that time would be [sitting] on [the throne of] the Apostolic See, to his successors, and to the Roman Church, and that he will keep all lands and peoples subject to his tsardom loyal and obedient to the Apostolic See. All this I will conscientiously adhere to. God and this Holy Gospel help me now and in the future. Amen.

[November 1204] Letter of Tsar Kaloyan to Pope Innocent III

Kaloyan, Tsar of Bulgaria and Vlachia, to the God-elevated, most holy, beloved of Christ and most respected father of my tsardom, Innocent the Third, most holy Pope of Rome and successor of the prince-apostle Peter.

The envoy of the Apostolic See, the lord Cardinal Leo, brought to my tsardom Your Holiness' writings.²⁷ When I found out that you are

²⁷ Cardinal Leo arrived in Tarnov on October 15, 1204.

sound and healthy, I praised God Almighty and His most holy Mother. Let the writings of my tsardom find Your Holiness alive and residing in joy and delight. By the grace of God Almighty and the most blessed Mother of God and through the intercession of Your Holiness my tsardom is healthy and very well with every joy and delight.

Let it be known to Your Holiness and spiritual father of my tsardom, Lord Pope, that lord Leo, envoy of the Apostolic See arrived before my tsardom and brought me a crown, and after blessing it, placed it on the head of my tsardom and placed in my hands a scepter and a banner, and blessed the most holy patriarch of my tsardom and all Bulgaria as Your Holiness had ordered. We praised much God and the most blessed Mother of God as well as Your Holiness' perceptiveness for granting to our tsardom what we desired according to our request, for which the entire Bulgaria and Vlachia and the domain of our entire tsardom much praised and glorified Your Holiness.²⁸

I am also writing on account of the Hungarian.²⁹ My tsardom has nothing to do with his domain or anything else that belongs to him, nor are we causing him any harm. On the contrary, it is him who attacks and harms the domain of my tsardom [and let Your Holiness decide] whether I am not respecting the Hungarian or whether he is not respecting my tsardom. Let Your Holiness write him to stay away from my tsardom because my tsardom has no intention either to disrespect him or to go against his territories. However, if he goes against the territories of my tsardom and with God's help he gets vanquished, let Your Holiness have no suspicions [of foul play on the part] of my tsardom, but let me be free [of blame].

Also, about the Latins who entered Constantinople.³⁰ I am writing to Your Holiness to [request that You] write them to stay away from my tsardom and not show us disrespect so that my tsardom would not cause them any harm. In case they initiate something against my tsardom, disrespect us, and kill some of the people subject to us, let Your Holiness not suspect my tsardom, but everything be free [of blame].

²⁸ Kaloyan pretends he obtained what he wished, recognition of his title of "tsar" or "emperor" in Latin usage. Innocent III could not have granted such a title to him: he only recognized Kaloyan as king. In his response the Pope too, pretended that he had granted Kaloyan's wish while explicitly referring to him as a king rather than an emperor. Nonetheless, what Kaloyan obtained was full diplomatic recognition.

²⁹ Either Imre I, who died in 1204, or Andrash II (1204–1235).

³⁰ The host of the Fourth Crusade.

I did send to Your Great Holiness two boys, the one called Basil, the other Betlehem.³¹ Let Your Holiness give orders that they be put to school to study the Latin letters, for we have no grammarians here who could translate the letters that you send us. When they complete their studies, let them be sent back to my tsardom. I also sent, for now, as a sign of remembrance, two *examitae*, two double *episimies*,³² the one white and the other red, and a cameo. Indeed, every time I send to Your Holiness, I will always remember Your Holiness.

[November 1204] Letter of Archbishop Basil to Pope Innocent III

Many bows and many greetings from me, Basil, the humble Primate of the Bulgarians and the Vlachs, to the father of all and my lord and father, the most magnificent and most holy Pope Innocent.

We pray the Almighty God and the most holy Mother of God and the most blessed apostles Peter and Paul that the message of our humbleness finds you safe and healthy. Through the magnificence of your lordship I am alive, by the will of God, though sunk in great sins. Let it, therefore, be known to Your Great Holiness that Cardinal Leo, sent by Your Holiness and the Apostolic See, arrived safe and sound, and came to our great city of Tarnov on the fifteenth day of the month of October, and brought us the full dignity of the patriarchal office and all the priestly adornments, which Your Great Holiness had sent us.³³ Also, he gave me the ring, as well as the privilege, the writings, and the instructions. According to the directions of Your Holiness he anointed me with chrism and blessed me and ordained me as patriarch on the seventh day of the month of November, that is, on the feast day of the holy apostle Jacob, the Lord's brother. On the same day I anointed two metropolitans and other bishops with great joy, and the cardinal blessed two of the metropolitans and gave them *paliums* and *mitras*, and placed *mitras* on the heads of the others. On the eight day of the same month, that is, on the feast day of the holy Michael, he crowned and blessed Tsar Kaloyan, Lord of all Bulgarians and Vlachs, and placed a tsar's crown on his head and a scepter in his hands.³⁴ All

³¹ One of the boys, of whom nothing more is known, was the tsar's illegitimate son, see the next letter.

³² Expensive, gold-woven liturgical vestments.

³³ Like Kaloyan, Basil states that he received what he was not granted, the dignity of patriarch.

³⁴ Basil repeats Kaloyan's assertion that he had been honored with imperial dignity.

this he did and performed according to the will of Your Holiness and after he blessed us, parted with us on the fifteenth day of the month of November. Moreover, let it be known to Your Holiness that on the command of the lord [tsar] I am sending you two boys, the one the son of the priest Constantine, the other of the tsar, so that they can learn, on the order of Your Holiness, the Latin letters. Whatever you can do to honor the tsar [please] do it. May God protect Your Holiness for the longest of time.

[1207] Reply of Tsar Kaloyan to the letter of Innocent III from earlier that year, (synopsis in the papal registers).

The above mentioned Ioanitiu or Kaloyan, tsar of the Bulgarians and the Vlachs, responded that after he had heard about the conquest of Constantinople he had sent many envoys and messengers to the Latins to conclude a peace [treaty] with them but they replied arrogantly telling him that there would be no peace with him until he returned the land that belonged to the Empire of Constantinople and that he had usurped with violence. To this he had answered that he owned that land more justly than they did own Constantinople, for he had only taken back the land that his forefathers had lost, whereas they had conquered Constantinople, which never belonged to them. Besides, he had received in a lawful manner the imperial crown from the supreme pontiff, whereas the one who called himself *basileus* of Constantinople appropriated the imperial crown arbitrarily and without any grounds. For that reason, the power belonged more rightfully to him [Kaloyan] than to the other one, and that is why he fought so confidently under the banner sent him by the blessed Peter and adorned with his keys against those with the false crosses on their shoulders. And so, provoked by them, he had been forced to defend himself against them, and God who opposes the arrogant and blesses the humble had granted him a surprise victory.³⁵ The victory itself he attributes to the blessed Peter, the prince of the apostles. However, he would not be able to set free the above mentioned emperor on his advice as per the request of the supreme pontiff for the former had paid the flesh its due while in prison.

³⁵ At the battle of Adrianople in 1205 where the Latin host was routed, many leading crusaders killed, and Emperor Baldwin I taken in captivity from which he never returned.

Treaty between Tsar Michael II Asen (1246–1256) and the commune of Dubrovnik, June 1253.

127

This treaty between Michael Asen and the commune of Dubrovnik was concluded on the eve of an aborted campaign against Serbia. It builds on the relationship established under Ioan Asen II but reflects the much more complicated situation in the Balkans in the early 1250s and the declining fortunes of Bulgaria. Its military and economic clauses indicate the existence of large semi-independent estates, or *apanages*, in the tsardom, which undercut its integrity and economy, the rise of powerful neighbors coveting chunks of Michael Asen's weak polity, namely Serbia and the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea, and the mounting Tartar menace. Edition: Ilinskij, *Gramoti bolgarskih tsarej*, 155–9.

In the name of our Lord God Jesus Christ, Amen. In the year of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ 1253, month of June, on the day of St Vitus, eleventh *indiction*.

In order that there is pure friendship and a relationship of pure affection, as it has formerly been between the holy and most glorious tsardom of the entire Bulgarian and Greek land of Ioan Asen [II] and the commune of our glorious city of Dubrovnik who lived in justice, love, and truth, let these grow even more and bear fruit, as you, the holy and faithful in Christ God tsar and sovereign of the entire Bulgarian land, Lord Michael Asen, born of pious and holy tsars, have long desired.

I, Marsili George, Prince of the city of Dubrovnik on the orders of the glorious doge of Venice, all the judges and members of the Council, and the entire commune of our most glorious city of Dubrovnik, small and great, faithful friends of your tsardom, long desiring to have love with your tsardom, swear in God, the divine Gospel, the holy Virgin Mary His Mother, the honest and life-giving cross, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, the blessed four evangelists Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, the holy martyrs of God Vlasius, Laurentius, Peter, and Andrew, our lights, and in all the saints who had pleased God, and we promise before your great tsardom to keep [with you] against the evildoings of the unfaithful King Urosh³⁶ and his brother and his kin and against all those who reside in his land, and against those who might own something in his land, and if they are unfaithful and enemies of your holy tsardom they will be unfaithful and enemies to our city of Dubrovnik as well. If some of the above mentioned or all of them turn up in your

³⁶ The Serbian King Urosh I (1243–1282).

holy tsardom, and your most glorious tsardom accepts them as friends, we too, will have them as our friends. If Urosh or some of the above mentioned kin of his is an enemy of our city of Dubrovnik let them be enemies of your holy tsardom. If some of the above mentioned happen to be friend of the city of Dubrovnik, let your high tsardom have them as friends. And if God helps your holy tsardom to drive your and our enemy Urosh out of the Serbian lands, and his brother Vladislav, and their kin and other magnates, and they flee to the city of Dubrovnik, we will take neither them, nor their writings, but will cause them as much harm as we can. Your holy tsardom will not make a peace with Urosh without us, leaving us without having made our peace with him; moreover, we will be with your holy tsardom against Urosh, yours and our enemy, and against his entire kin, and against anyone who would sit on his throne, and we will have war or peace together with them for as long as your tsardom and we live. We will assist your holy tsardom with everything in our power along the coast, on sea and overland, and if God helps your holy tsardom to conquer the land of Rashka [Serbia—KP] with all that belongs to it, and God helps us to take all the coastal cities and strongholds that are subject to the throne of Rashka, we will hand them over, as much as we can, to your holy tsardom or to the man that your holy tsardom will have sent in good faith and without damage. When we learn that your tsardom has invaded the Serbian land we will prepare ourselves for no longer than two weeks after we will have heard about it and will set off on the sea against the towns along the coast with the people that are in Dubrovnik at the time, leaving behind only as many as are necessary to protect the city of Dubrovnik. If Urosh or his brother Vladislav or someone else of their kin or a magnate desired to cause us harm or harmed us, then your holy tsardom ought to help us with all your power against them and cause them harm.

The people and the traders from your holy tsardom and from the lands of the *sevastocrator*, the son-in-law of your holy tsardom and their property, if they come to our city of Dubrovnik, will be secure and protected within its domain as the citizens of Dubrovnik are, and can stay in Dubrovnik if they wish, and are allowed to have a market, selling and buying without dues and without damage, and tax will not taken from them, either at the gates, or at bridges, or at the fords, or on the roads, but they can buy any merchandise they need, be it gold, silver, clothes, golden fabrics, and anything else they might need, except wheat, which cannot be exported from the city of Dubrovnik without

permission from the prince who is at the time in the principedom of Dubrovnik. In the same way, the people and the merchants of the most glorious city of Dubrovnik, when they come to the land of your holy tsardom or the land of the son-in-law of your holy tsardom, the *sevastocrator* Peter, are to buy and sell freely in the said lands without damage any kind of merchandise as they wish and are to be troubled by customs or any tax neither in the City [of Tarnov] nor at fairs, nor in villages of merchants, nor at bridges, nor at rivers, nor on the roads, but should be free anywhere and stay and travel as they wish and be protected and secure in their persons and their goods. If it so happens that a man or a merchant of your holy tsardom or a man or a merchant of the son-in-law of yours, the high *sevastocrator* Peter, died in the principedom of Dubrovnik, with or without a will, and he is without company, we will command that the entire property of the deceased is inventoried and whenever your holy tsardom sends a letter of yours about him we will hand it over and nothing of the property of the deceased will be lost on our account. Also, if death happens to people or merchants from Dubrovnik, with or without a will, in the lands of your holy tsardom or in the lands of the high *sevastocrator* Sir Peter, and they had no company, the property of the deceased should be kept by your holy tsardom, to be given to those who would be sent for the property of the said deceased with a letter from the lord prince of Dubrovnik. And if the people of your holy tsardom or of Peter, the high *sevastocrator*, have any claims against a man from the principedom of Dubrovnik, we take the obligation to offer him due process and complete justice for free and without fees, according to our laws. Also let our people in the land of your holy tsardom and [that of] *sevastocrator* Peter have full justice [according to the laws] of your holy stardom and [those of] the high *sevastocrator* Peter, without any fees and without court expenses. No deals should be made between your holy tsardom and us until justice is done.

If God helps your holy tsardom to conquer the Serbian land we are to have with them the same old treaties that the city of Dubrovnik had, and in reference to all Serbian and coastal regions and cities let us have the same treaties that we have had with them for the fifteen years that have passed. And if God helps your holy tsardom to become master of the entire Serbian land, let not evil people stir up trouble between your holy tsardom and our city, but let love grow from good to better. We would like to note here the territories and villages and estates on the land and the villages' properties on dry ground, and the estates of

those lands and of those villages and estates [belonging to Dubrovnik] which the Lord God will help your holy tsardom to conquer. The above mentioned lands and villages and estates of our grandfathers begin at the church of St George against the old city of Epidaurus, then go to the church of St Peter, and from the church of St Peter go to the church of St Pokrit, keeping up to the peak Benoma, and descend toward the mills all the way to Vlashitsa, and from Vlashitsa, keeping to the high grounds above Shumet reach to the spring, and from the other side of the spring, still keeping to the high grounds above the river reach even to the hills above Korila, and from Korila go along the high ground above Zaton and Politsa and Oreshets, and extend to the church of St Tekla. All these said lands and villages and estates which descend from the top of the said high grounds to the sea are ours and our grandfathers'.

As for the treaty about the salt custom dues between the Serbian king and the city of Dubrovnik, let your holy tsardom stick to it, namely: half of the profits from the sale of all the salt sold to the people of Rashka your holy tsardom should keep, and the other half the commune of Dubrovnik should have, as it was in the old law. Your holy tsardom is to keep the old law for us, namely that from the river Drin to Neretva the salt customs should be collected in no other place but Dubrovnik.

And if God helps your holy tsardom to conquer all coastal towns, our bright mother Church, the mother of all of our churches, will possess everything it owned in the cities and on the land, be it bishoprics, or monasteries, or churches, or priests, or other rights that it has had since ancient times, and possess them freely as it is written in the ancient customaries.

We, the entire commune of our city of Dubrovnik, small and great, will be obligated to make all princes who in the future will be in Dubrovnik at the will of the glorious doge of Venice take an oath to keep this promise for as long as they rule at the time they take the princely oath for the principedom of Dubrovnik. If we break this oath and this promise, let God judge us on account of this oath in this world and the next and let us and our children be under the interdict and the wrath of the high Pope of Rome forever. Everything that is written above we will have and keep to, respecting the oath and the honor and the service that we owe to the lord Doge of the Venetian commune, for as long your tsardom and we exist. So that this promise is confirmed to the extent possible, this writing is sealed with the seal

of the commune and of the glorious Marsili George, prince of our city of Dubrovnik.

Here are the names of the persons who swore that this promise will be firm and solid. First, the glorious magnate, Lord Marsili George, Prince of Dubrovnik. The Judges [five names]. Members of the Small Council [six names]. From the reduced Council [six names]. City councilmen [three names]. Protectors of the commune [two names]. The ones who have the property of the Holy Mother of God [two names]. Members of the Great Council [seventy two names]. For the entire writing Martol Gulerivik, *ban* of the prince of Dubrovnik and the entire commune of the city of Dubrovnik by the will of the lord prince of Dubrovnik and the magnates of Dubrovnik, after having sounded the bell to call the assembly, as the law of Dubrovnik requires, confirmed and on his soul and these of the Commune of Dubrovnik, swore to hold.

Treaty between Tsar Ioan Alexander (1331–1371) and Venice, late 1347.

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The manuscript of the treaty is preserved in *Codice trevisano*, fol. 446, *Archivio di Stato*, Venice. Edition: V. Gjuzelev, "Les relations bulgaro-venetiennes durant la premiere moitie du XIV^e siecle," *Etudes Historiques*, 9 (1979), 72–3.

Oath and treaty [*sacramento e patto*] of the Lord Emperor of Zagora Alexander.

My tsardom gives this letter of safe conduct to my friends and brothers, the Venetian Franks, and my tsardom swears in God the Father, in Virgin Mary, in the holy and life-giving cross, in the holy Paraskeva of Tarnov, and in my soul, that all the Venetian merchants might come and go on their ships throughout my entire tsardom and be safe and sound.

They will pay customs of three percent. The son will not be punished for the father neither the father for the son. If there is a shipwreck and the ship goes under the people and their properties will be saved. For a load [in value] of one hundred *perperi* they will pay four *grosch*; for a volume of one hundred *modii*, three *grosch*. To weigh their wares on scales, one and a half *aspri*. The anchoring fee for a great ship [will be] two *perperi*; for a small ship, one *perpera*. If their merchandise does not sell in the land or on the water, let them go wherever they choose and pay nothing. Also, [the merchandise] cannot be sealed or held in the house of a Venetian without a court order. Also, if a Venetian dies, no one is to touch his property but other Venetians. Also, they can buy and build a church and a *loggia* anywhere they please in the country

without anyone putting obstacles to this decree. If anyone goes against them, he will be a traitor of my tsardom.

This copy was sent by the Venetian Marco Leonardo, Consul of the Venetians in Varna, in October 1352, accompanied by the letter of the same tsar [to the Doge Andrea Dandolo] dated October 1352, as it is written, with a note by the said consul, namely: “I remind you that the *perper* of Varna weights sixteen carats and two thirds and costs six *grosch* and five *aspers*; the [Byzantine?] *perper* costs eight *aspers* and one *grosch*.”

129 *Letter and Charter of Tsar Ioan Alexander to the Venetian Doge Andrea Dandolo, October 4, 1352.*

The letter confirms the authenticity of the “Oath and Treaty” issued by Ioan Alexander in 1347 and now sent to the doge and Great Council of Venice. *Codice trevisano*, fol. 447, *Archivio di Stato*, Venice. Edition: Gjuzelev, *ibidem*.

Inside: In the name of Christ, Amen. 1352, day 4, October, in Nicopol.

Ioan Alexander, by God’s grace tsar of Zagora and of Bulgarians and Greeks, to the magnificent and mighty friend and brother, the most precious Lord Andrea Dandolo, Doge of Venice, with his noble Council, greetings and love.

We received a letter sent by the nobleman Lord Marino Falieri which we now understand and to which we reply that we have always desired and desire to receive messengers from you and we now expect them. My tsardom has always respected and respects your Highness and your Republic and any person that comes [from you] to my tsardom. Also, if your merchants desire to come to my tsardom with their merchandise, my tsardom promises and swears in the Most Glorious Christ and the Virgin Mary, and in the holy Petka of Tarnov, and in my soul, that they will be safe and sound, the people and their wares, wherever they wish to go and stay according to the oath and treaty that I have granted earlier.

+ Ioan Alexander, tsar of all Bulgarians and Greeks +

The letters written above are in *minium* [red ink] and mean “Ioan Alexander by God’s grace tsar of Bulgaria and Zagora” and are partly Greek letters, partly Bulgarian or Persian.

Outside: I think that the contents of the small Bulgarian or Persian letters, partly Greek, partly mixed with Bulgarian, means: “To the most precious Lord Andrea Dandolo, doge of Venice.”

Treaty between Ivanko, lord of Dobrudja (northeastern Bulgaria) and the commune of Genoa, May 27, 1387.

130

On the eve of the Ottoman conquest the partition of the country among the members of the royal house and powerful independent lords created “three Bulgarias,” the third one being the large domain of Despot Dobrotitsa and his heir, Prince Ivanko, in the northeast corner of the country. The house of Dobrotitsa was related to the ruling dynasty and profited handsomely from participating in the lucrative Italian trade in the Black Sea. The treaty affords a glimpse of the conditions on which the coastal Bulgarians got their small share of this segment of the global exchange: the extensive immunities and extra-territorial privileges, which the Genoese enjoyed in his domains. Edition: Vasil Zlatarski and Gavril Kazarov, eds., “Dogovorot na knjaz Ivanko, sin Dobrotichev, s genueszite ot 1387,” *Izvestija na Istoricheskoto Druzhestvo* 3 (1911), 20–36.

In the name of God, Amen.

1. The excellent and mighty men, the lord John of Mezano, *podesta* of Pera and of the Genoese in the Byzantine empire, Gentile de Grimaldi, Gianone de Bosco, envoys and confidants of the splendid lord Antoniotto Adurno, by God’s grace doge of the Genoese and defender of the people of the Council of the Elders of the city of Genoa, as well as the Office of the Eight Citizens, put to arrange and discuss the affairs in the lands of the East, for which appointment, delegated by the lord doge, the Council, and the Office to the persons of the said lords Gentile and Gianone, and about whose full, sufficient, and broad prerogatives testifies the document of the state written by the hand of Pietro de Bargalio, notary and *cancellarius* of the commune of Genoa, on March 22, 1387, in the name and on the part of the commune of Genoa and all the Genoese residing anywhere in the world, on the one hand, and the noted and wise men, the lords Kosta and Iolpani, envoys, messengers, and special confidants for the things mentioned below, sent by the splendid and mighty lord Ivanko, son of the excellent lord Dobrotiza of blessed memory, with full and sufficient powers, as it is testified for by the open letter signed with the personal signature of the said lord Ivanko, with the following content: “Ivanko by God’s grace Despot,” written on the thirteenth day of the current month of May, and handed today by the said envoys to the said *podesta*, and the messengers in the name and on the part of the above mentioned lord Ivanko and all of his subjects, on the other hand, in the presence of the Council of Elders of the said lord *podesta* and all of Pera, whose names are:

Rafael de Aman, Lodisius Vairolos, Lucas Ususmaris, John Pancha, Dominic Maribonus, Filipe Rubens and Darius Spinola.

2. The said parties with the said persons came and confessed that they have come for a true and lasting peace, that is, the said persons [on behalf of the] said parties have forgiven to one another and between themselves the one party to the other and vice-versa, all insults, offenses, violence, robberies, killings, and anything else done to this point, to this day and hour, by one of the said parties to the other in what ever manner and way. At that, the said persons and the said parties, undertake through solemn promises made by the one to the other and vice-versa, given for now and for the future, not to harm one another but to keep and honor forever the peace according to the provisions, agreements, promises, conditions, and stipulations outlined below. They give up any objections to the said peace [namely that]: it was not concluded as [recorded above]; the below-mentioned agreements, promises, and conditions have not been made; the affair was not done as [recorded] above and in what follows; and that it should be considered that [there was no] deceit, threat, action, or condition [included] without grounds and any other right.
3. The above-mentioned lord *podesta* and the said envoys, namely in the name and on behalf of the said commune and the said Genoese promised to the said lords Kosta and Iolpani, the above-mentioned envoys, that from the day of the conclusion of this peace and in the future [the Genoese] will interact, deal with, and treat with favor the said lord Ivanko and his subjects and any other of his subjects [found] in whatever territories of the commune of Genoa; they will faithfully protect and defend his subjects and people themselves and their possessions and wares; will dispense and afford justice to the same people and subjects of the said lord Ivanko and will make sure that justice is done, dispensed, and accorded them in respect to the Genoese, individual persons or the entire community, who owe them or who in another way have caused or will cause loss to the said people and subjects, from the day of the conclusion of this peace and in the future; [this applies] to their property and persons anywhere in the dominions of the said commune according to what appears best for the said commune and the governor of the said commune, with every justice.

4. Also, Genoese ships and ships sent by Genoa are prohibited from causing damages to the said lord Ivanko and his people, territories, and provinces.
5. Also, if it happens that someone finds refuge in the lands and provinces of the said lord Ivanko and brings along property or merchandise of some Genoese, then, after the property and merchandise are returned, such people are allowed to get protection and refuge in his domain, their persons and their wares. The same procedure applies to those who flee from the domain of the said lord Ivanko and find refuge in the domains of the commune.
6. In return, the said Kosta and Iolpani, the mentioned envoys, promised the said lords, the *podesta* and the said envoys, who receive [the promise] on behalf of the commune of Genoa and each individual Genoese to respect, host, admit, and treat favorably individual Genoese and the commune in all the lands and provinces subject to them and those that will be subject to them; to faithfully defend and soundly protect them on land and on the sea; not to allow the persons and property of those who suffered shipwreck to be harmed but, on the contrary, to shield them from any abuse, harm, injury, and violence in their domain and province, in the lands and possessions that are their now and will be theirs in the future, and in any other part of the world. In the said lands they are to admit a Genoese consul, who is to administer and dispense justice to all the Genoese in the conflicts and litigations that may arise among the Genoese or between the said Genoese and subjects of the said lord Ivanko in civil and criminal cases, but in such a way that the claimant is to seek justice from the accused. To this consul, who is to be selected and sent, and will reside in the said territories, help, advice, support, and protection is to be afforded for the fulfillment of his office and he is to govern and lead all the Genoese who visit his district; and to him and to the other Genoese full justice is to be afforded and provided for everything else that is subject to his court and jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases. Under “Genoese” here are understood all those whom the Genoese consul declares, says, and names as Genoese or considers them such.
7. The above mentioned Kosta and Iolpani, the said envoys, promise as well to the said lords, the *podesta*, and the envoys, who accept from the above mentioned persons that [lord Ivanko] will treat favorably and with courtesy any of the Genoese consuls who reside in his domain, will hear their cases and those of the ones sent by them,

and try quickly and appropriately any case that pertains to him as his conscience leads the said lord, so that they are deservedly satisfied with him. Also, they bind themselves and take the obligation to give, transfer, and provide to the said consul or consuls who are duly to be selected and sent, as it was said above, a convenient, appropriate, and suitable piece of land on which storehouses and a church can be built, where the said Genoese who reside in and visit his lands will be able to reside, stay, and live, will not be harassed or bothered and [no one will be] allowed to harass or bother one or more of the said Genoese on account of a crime or an offense committed and done by one or several Genoese. Nor will anyone who is innocent suffer punishment on behalf of some one else who did commit an offence or a crime, but, on the contrary, punishment will be meted out at the guilty ones. Also, it will not happen that “because of the bitter grapes eaten by the fathers the sons’ teeth went numb” or the other way round; that is, the son will not be punished for the crime of the father and vice-versa. The Genoese consul who will be found at the place where the crime was committed is to judge such evil-doers and criminals and pass a sentence as he sees fit and according to justice.

8. Also, the above-mentioned envoys promised that his excellence lord Ivanko will give the Genoese a good, true, and lawful account of all losses, robberies, thefts, and violence perpetrated against the Genoese, which would have been known from the day of the conclusion of this treaty to the Genoese consul or consuls who are in his land, and would have been committed by his subjects or others under the power of the said lord Ivanko, or other persons, no matter their status, in such a way that the said Genoese will be fully and speedily compensated for their losses without any further investigation. Also, they promised that when Greeks, Bulgarians, or persons of another status appear as witnesses against the Genoese, they will make them swear in what is necessary and binding according to their custom before their testimony is presented to any court.
9. Also, the above mentioned envoys and messengers promised that his excellence lord Ivanko himself will defend all the Genoese residing in his province, their persons and their property, from any other person and will guard and defend all of the Genoese and their possessions everywhere in his province. And if it happens that lord Ivanko himself wishes to abolish this peace or the commune of Genoa finds itself in war with him, then even in such case lord Ivanko takes the

- obligation to guard and defend the Genoese and their properties, giving them and supplying them with ships on which they could in an appropriate and sufficient time leave his province, to export in a month's time their light chattels and merchandise, and for the salt and the ships they will have six months; and so they will be able to freely leave his province in person and with their properties. In return, [the same] is to be done with his people and subjects who reside on territories of the commune.
10. Also, the above mentioned envoys and messengers promised and took a solemn oath that the above mentioned excellent lord Ivanko will not prohibit the Genoese from exporting always and whenever they wish from the above mentioned province of his or from lands that might become his, of their own free will all kinds of provisions which the Genoese themselves have bought or acquired in any way in such a manner that there will be no embargo on the said Genoese and he will permit them to purchase in his province any kind of stuff and provision they wish except in time of famine. In such time it is permitted to him to issue an embargo and a ban in his province even to the Genoese, as long as this is applied to all other foreigners as well; if, however, he lifts the prohibition to any other foreigners, then he takes the obligation to make this possible for the said Genoese as well.
 11. Also, the above mentioned envoys and messengers promised that the said lord Ivanko will set free, individually and as a group, all the Genoese who would be found in his territories and lands together with their wives, concubines, and children, even the illegitimate ones, in such a manner that he would not hold back in whatever way any Genoese or anyone of their families (except their slaves) but give them the option to go whenever they wish on their own free will as friends of the above mentioned lord Ivanko. All those (and their families), who will be, all together or individually, declared by the Genoese consul to be Genoese will be considered Genoese.
 12. Also, the above mentioned envoys and messengers promised that the said lord Ivanko will protect and guard all the wares and merchandise, individually or all together, of the above mentioned Genoese and will not demand, take, or collect [anything] from them, nor will he allow anything to be demanded, taken, or collected from the said Genoese of ours on account of their wares and merchandise, which are imported, transported, or sent there overland or on the sea, more than two percent of the price and the estimate

of the said wares, that is, one percent on imports and one percent on exports. This provision does not apply to ships, gold, silver, true pearls and other jewels, which are excluded; on the contrary, in respect to the ships, gold, silver, pearls, and jewels such as are imported and transported there, as well as these that are exported and carried away from there, our Genoese should be considered free from taxes and custom dues and are to be considered free, released, and unburdened by the lord Ivanko himself and by his subjects and officials and it will be understood that the said Genoese will be obligated to pay the customs dues mentioned above if they are selling or bartering the above mentioned merchandise. However, if they do not sell or barter anything they will not be obliged to pay, except on account of the wares or merchandise, which they import or export from the said territories from or into other lands, on which goods they will pay only one percent. To the Genoese themselves no fine, tax, or “loan” should be imposed in the said lands by the said lord Ivanko himself or by his subjects and officials.

13. Also, the above mentioned envoys and messengers promised that the said lord Ivanko within two months of being notified of the said peace will freely restore to the heirs of the deceased Lodisio de Guasto or to a person well versed in the laws on behalf of his heirs, or to a person sent by the commune, those goods and properties of the said deceased Lodisio, which goods and properties fell in the hands of lord Ivanko himself or in the hands of his subjects at the time of the death of the said deceased Lodisio.
14. Also, the above mentioned envoys promised that the excellent lord Ivanko himself within a month from the day on which he will be notified of the said peace through an act of state will confirm, approve, and ratify with oaths and all other guarantees the said peace and all things it contains, individually and all together, and he will promise that these will be observed forever.
15. The said parties and said persons between themselves and mutually, one party to the other and vice-versa, with solemn promises given by the one party and then the other promised the above mentioned things individually and all together, and as a guarantee swore on the holy and divine Gospel, touching closely the holy Gospel, that is, the said lord *podesta*, the envoys, and the council according to the Latin custom, touching the Holy Scripture, and the said lords Kosta and Iolpani the above mentioned envoys and

- messengers according to the Greek custom, to have and maintain forever the above mentioned [peace], individually they, their people, their subjects, and their officials, and those of the said commune, and that all the Genoese will keep to it and observe it diligently, freely, and firmly, and will not oppose or obstruct it in anything on whatever grounds that can be said or invented in law or in action, under the penalty of one hundred thousand gold *perpera* according to the exchange rate of Pera. Subject to this fine is the party that does not honor [the peace] to the benefit of the party that keeps it always when there is infringement or breach, as it was said, to the damage of the party that observes it. This fine can be imposed and demanded by the party that honors [the peace] from the party that breaks it in any case when there is a violation or, as mentioned above, infringement, through restitution for any and all damage and expenses which have been suffered on that account. Regardless of whether that fine is paid or not paid, any and all of the above mentioned provisions are to be honored firmly, correctly, and forever. In order that any and all of these provisions are kept and observed the said lord *podesta*, the envoys, and the council obligated themselves and pledged to the said envoys [Kosta and Iolpani] all of the properties, any and all, of the said commune of Genoa and the city of Pera, which are not subject to pledge under another provision, and the said envoys [pledged] the properties, any and all, of the said lord Ivanko, current and future, chattels and real estate, which he currently owns and possesses or will own and possess in the future.
16. Done in Pera, in the residential palace of the *podesta*, in the upper room of the said palace, in the year of the birth of the Lord 1387, ninth *indiction* according to the calendar of Genoa, on the twenty-seventh day of May, after three o'clock and before nine o'clock, in the presence of the witnesses called upon and invited: the honorable man lord Antonio de Via, deputy-notary of the curia of the *podesta* himself; Angelino de Sirimbaldio; de Saulo; Lodisio di Ponte, son of the deceased Giovanni; Lodisio Carpeneto, son of Laurenzio; Bartolomeo Vilanuccio, notary and state interpreter, who read all that was said above and explained it to the said Kosta and Iolpani; Giovanni de Bozzolo, notary; and Rafaelo de Via Cava, son of Giorgio, a military man of the curia of the *podesta*.
 17. The above is a transcript from the volume or the book of treaties of the commune of Pera which is kept by the lord *podesta* of Pera,

from the truthful act of state written by the hand of Ettore de Abeneriis, notary, and displayed and published in the said book.

Antonio de Murtedo de Moniglia, notary.

Ecclesiastical Records and Annals

- 131 *Patriarch Euthymius, Letter to Cyprian, monk in the Holy Mountain, before 1395 (excerpts).*

Patriarch Euthymius was an acknowledged authority in dogmatic matters and his opinion was sought on a variety of occasions. His responses to Cyprian, Nicodim of Tismana, and Daniel Kretopoulos (metropolitan Antimos), all of them well known hesichasts and prominent literati, have evidently been considered important enough to be preserved for future reference. Cyprian (c. 1330–1406) was a Bulgarian, disciple of Theodosius of Tarnov, later metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia. After the death of their teacher in Constantinople, Euthymius and Cyprian had a short stint together in Mount Athos. In 1371 Euthymius went back to take on the leadership of the Bulgarian church, while Cyprian remained a few more years in Mount Athos before moving back to Constantinople and then on to his distinguished career in Russia. The letter was written between 1371 and 1374, while Cyprian was still part of the monastic and ascetic community and testifies that the local hesichasts did not fully agree on issues that went beyond their personal *praxis* of the faith. Edition: Kałużniacki, *Werke*, 225–238.

Missive from the patriarch of Tarnov Euthymius to the monk Cyprian who resides in the Holy Mount of Athos and has asked that an explanation of certain ecclesiastical customs was sent to him.

We rejoiced much at your letter and the strong flame of our love was kindled. Such is the soul, oh one pleasing God, according to what has been said: “My eyes long for your sermon and repeat, When will you console me?” that only the consolation of the word is of any use. Just like the quest for the divine law and what is useful for the mind is success in itself, so is the frequent coming closer to God on account of which the prophet, when he was tempted, instructed us: “Abandon you evil deeds and comprehend that I am God.” First Elijah and then John followed that law. The former performed heroic deeds in the silence of Carmel, giving himself to God, the latter lived in the desert even to the day when he appeared to Israel and was honored with baptizing the Lord and seeing the Holy and Honored Spirit in the image of a dove, and with hearing the divine voice that came from Heaven: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen up to him.” Such are the gifts of the desert; such are the fruits of the desert; these things the

desert granted not only to them but to all who wish to follow in their footsteps. The desert is the mother of silence; the desert is the teacher of fasting, a spiritual spouse and a ladder that leads to Heaven, the straight path to God, and the link of true marriage. Silence and fasting are intecessors for righteousness, instructors in celibacy, invincible weapon against the enemy, and a stout pillar in the face of the foe. Those who walk through it with diligence are following the right current, march on the tsar's highway; [they] stifle their passions and raise their souls to Heaven. Everyone marvels at them; to every one they are accessible, they are beautiful in the eyes of every one. They love the Tsar and Lord of all with all their hearts and He loves them. If they request something in His name, He generously grants it in accordance with His true promise. You persuaded us with your letter to write you about things, which for many people seem open to questioning. This is pleasing to God and us because it is said: "Blessed the ones who study His law and seek it with all their hearts."

Question: Your request, therefore, was as follows: A great dispute rages among us. Some say that throughout the entire Pentecost and during the twelve days of Christmas one should bow neither in the church nor in their cells. Others argue that in church one should not, but it is not forbidden when being alone in the cell. We do not know what to think on this issue and other similar issues; do enlighten us, if you please, by a letter so that we stop the clatter of disputation.

Answer: Earlier, when the holy and conciliar apostolic church was shaken by the winds of heresy, every one did as they pleased and only looked to keep the correct dogma. Every one praised God with fasts and bows in their cells and in church according to their diligence. Some spent the entire night with their hands raised to God; others bowed down; still others, having crossed their arms, spent their night as they wished: in other words, every one did as they saw fit. Later, however, when by the grace of Christ heresy was completely destroyed, the honored Holy Spirit willed to inspire the holy fathers and through them enlighten with the true Law and strengthen and confirm the entire universe in the true faith. This is why now the divine Church, confirmed upon the rock of faith, raises like a Queen, and is dressed and adorned in golden threads and gold-woven attires—that is, in diverse virtues—and calls out with a mighty trumpet: "Come, children, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of God." This is why God loves more the faith of Sion than all the meadows of Jacob. Even Solomon, in his songs somehow hints of the Church, when he says: "Many daughters had command

over armies, many had riches, but you succeeded and rose higher than all of them.” When the holy and oecumenical councils inspired by the Holy Spirit gathered, as was mentioned above, they drove far away from the church and destroyed completely all impurity and the deceiving and foreign rites of the pseudo-teachers, and planted and confirmed the Orthodox rites, they also abolished the actions that stem from one’s will as pernicious and conducive to error, and eliminated them from the church. This is why now the Church of God flourishes like a Phoenician palm and like a Lebanese cedar. Even the wisest Solomon praises this, saying: “You are good, my sincere one, and there is no one better than you!” This is why the Seventh Oecumenical Council, taking all this into account, says in the Preface to its divine decrees, toward the end, something to this effect: “All the decrees given through the holy trumpets of the Spirit to the most praised apostles, and those of the holy oecumenical and local councils who convened to promulgate them, as well as the [decrees] of our other holy fathers, all of them, having been illuminated by the same Spirit contained useful things; what they condemned, we too condemn; what they threw out, we throw out; what [they] anathemized, we subject to anathema; what they forbad, we forbid as well. . . .” The 90th Rule of the Sixth Council says: “Not to bow down on Sundays is what we inherited from the God-bearing Fathers; in this way we honor the Resurrection of Christ.” It is not unknown but still, let us announce to the faithful this clear rule: According to proper custom, no one should bow down from the beginning of the “small entry” on Saturday night to Sunday night when, after the evening, entry we resume bowing down and offering the Lord our prayers. Because we agree that the night that comes after Saturday precedes the Resurrection of our Savior, we begin at that point our spiritual singing thus extending the feast from darkness to light so that we can celebrate the Resurrection throughout the entire night and day. The divine Basil the Great writes piously and in much detail about this to Amphylochius, the bishop of Iconia. Whoever is curious, if he takes the trouble, will seek and find there the solution to what he is looking for. We, to cut the long story short, give a short answer, taking our cue from the laws of Moses. We accepted that we should work six days per week. Saturday is for rest, yours and every living being’s. “You and your servant,” he said, “and your beasts should have a rest.” And because on the seventh day God rested after all that He had accomplished and He blessed the eight number that is why the eight day, Sunday, carries

the image of Resurrection or, to be more precise, provides the proto-image of the future, eighth age.

Patriarch Euthymius' second letter to Nicodim of Tismana (fragment).

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Two of Euthymius' letters to Nicodim of Tismana are extant, the first in full, the second as a fragment. Like the rest of the extant pieces of Euthymius' correspondence, both contain only dogmatic matters and no personal information. Nicodim was most likely a Serbian by origin, born in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. He spent many years in Mount Athos, perfecting his understanding and praxis of hesichasm. He grew to become abbot of Hilendar, the Serbian foundation, and later the head of the entire ecclesiastical community in Mount Athos. In the late 1350s or early 1360s he moved to Vlachia, where he founded a new monastery at Voditsa and later became abbot of the larger foundation of Tismana. He died in 1406. The first letter addresses the theological issue of why Moses asked God about the visible things and skipped the more important question about the higher, invisible hierarchies. Euthymius answered using Pseudo-Dionisius Areopagite and the interpretations of Maxim the Confessor. The second letter, translated here, is preserved in a fragment, and concerns a much more practical issue, some sexual practices among the members of the ecclesiastical estate. Both letters appear to have been written after 1385 when Nicodim became abbot of Tismana, but an earlier date it is not impossible, given the practice of using the most conspicuous of the titles of prominent figures throughout. Edition: Kałużniacki, *Werke*, 221–224.

Nikodim's question: In the Rules of the holy fathers we do find that the male sex after the fifteenth year should be condemned for the sin of fornication. Nowadays we find out that even before they reach that age many, let us say on account of madness fornicate with their hand. Now even if there has been no ejaculation, but only something like water flowed out of the member following orgasm, if something like this happens either with a man or an animal, could such [men] be consecrated priests or not?

Euthymius's answer: This issue requires much attention and care because if someone is too lenient they will fall in the heresy of the Masalians; if, on the contrary, they dig too deep, they may fall pray to the deception of Novatian. Even though in our days some clergymen, spurred by sympathy, have the custom of forgiving their [spiritual] children, vigilance as well as the divine rules forbid it. If the priest is, and calls himself, angel of God Almighty, as the great Dionisius [Pseudo-Areopagite] says and, praying over the divine gifts is a member of the Lord's hierarchy, the priest therefore should live the angelic life, and live

in dignity and grace. For that reason corporeal purity has to be very strictly preserved by those who would like to be elevated to the priestly dignity, as the apostle says: "Brothers, I beg you to present your bodies pure: a pure sacrifice to God." Therefore, the young ones have to be on their guard not on account of age, but according to their desires. For some of them, because of their hot temper, feel a natural urge to ejaculate not at fifteen or fourteen, but already at their thirteenth year. I have myself seen a boy who had not yet completed his twelfth year and committed fornication with a virgin. Do not doubt this: there are many witnesses still with us. As for those who happen to be cold by nature, they have no desire even until their eighteenth year, still less at their fifteenth and sixteenth year, because they lack the fire that urges them to lust. That is why I think that such [men] should be admitted into the priestly ranks. As for those whom I mentioned earlier, they should not [be admitted] just like this, but have to be examined well, including through spiritual tests, lest by our leniency we become the cause of their perdition, according to what the apostle said: "Preserve yourself pure in everything and do not join others in sin." As for those who sin with a man or a beast, this is completely forbidden by the Rules. Even before the liquid is poured out, they become completely mad on account of their lust, and after the liquid flows out, the member shrinks and becomes incapable. The great Paul drove those who pour out their seed [*onanists*] from the Kingdom of God; what about those who sin with another's body? The Rule barely admits into the priesthood those who have lost their sense once or twice and after that strove with much diligence, and that only in extreme situations, and forbids it in regular cases; the one who has sinned with another's body is rejected in all cases. How can you call pure the body that has poured its own pollution into another body through defiling mingling? It is not just me who thinks that way. The holy John the Hermit is a witness who was most sympathetic and most merciful to humankind. For he says the following: "If someone is a virgin, and has a lay, a monastic, or a priestly dignity, and he has been defiled by someone but it is only on the tight, it is fit that he receives penance and is consecrated, especially if it only happened once or twice. But, if it occurred many times and anally, he should not be given the rank of deacon or any priestly rank. Because, even though he did not sin, "the vessel has cracked." Once he has been defiled, he cannot serve as a priest. If, however, he has given himself to self-satisfaction before he has been consecrated, not realizing what he has been doing and that it would be a problem for

his eventual priesthood or, if he has unwittingly learned this vice from someone else, and is a wise and pious man, let him do penance and then be admitted into the priesthood. If he falls pray to it after he has been consecrated, as we said earlier, be it because of ignorance, be it because someone else taught him, let him receive his punishment lest something bad happens, and be suspended. [After his punishment] is over, he can serve. If, however, that thing happens again he cannot serve any longer.” So much about that.

Anyone who wishes to obtain the rank of a priest should lead a pure life and preserve his body clean for the angelic dignity. The divine Anastasius tells us [the following story about] the priest being like an angel of the Lord. In a town in the mountains of Lebanon there was a presbyter. The foremost man in town came to him one night, demanding that he baptized his little child, which was about to die. The presbyter got up, said the prayers for the holy baptism, and began to prepare the water and the oil. However, before he was ready according to the custom, the child died. He took it and put in front of the basin. What happened next? He spoke to the angel: “I am talking to you, my comrade and angel of God! Desist from the power that God gave to the priests to tie and untie what is on heaven and earth! Return the soul of the child to its body so it can be baptized; you have not been allowed to snatch his soul before baptism!” As soon as the presbyter told this to the angel, the child revived and, after having been baptized, died in the Lord. Such is the power of purity! This is how the Lord rewards those who keep immaculate their bodily purity for His sake and glory.

Bulgarian additions to the Synodikon in the Sunday of Orthodoxy (known as Synodikon of Tsar Boril), composed in 1211, with later additions.

133

The *Synodikon in the Sunday of Orthodoxy* is the main anti-heretical guide of the Byzantine Church. Initiated at the council celebrating the suppression of iconoclasm under Empress Theodora in 843, it gradually accumulated all major pronouncements of the Byzantine Church condemning the deviations from the faith. Several dozens of copies and variants are extant, since portions of it were supposed to be read in metropolitan churches on the feast of the first Sunday of Lent. In 1211, shortly after an anti-Bogomil council of the Church of Tarnov, the *Synodikon* was translated into Middle Bulgarian; from that version a Serbian and a Russian copy were later made. In Bulgaria, the *Synodikon* quickly evolved from a strictly dogmatic digest to a miscellaneous collection including historical documents, memorial lists of Bulgarian church

leaders, tsars, and notables, and annalistic notes, which were added to the document as time went on. The Middle Bulgarian version is now extant in only two copies, one from ca. 1381–1385 (the so-called Palauzov copy, “P”) with later memorial entries made in Vlachia and Moldova, and the other from the third quarter of the sixteenth century (the so-called Drinov copy, “D”). Both are incomplete. What follows are the original Bulgarian additions; the bulk of the *Synodikon* keeps closely to the Greek text, edited by Jean Gouillard, “Le Synodikon de l’Orthodoxie,” in *Travaux et mémoires* 2 (1967) and is omitted here. Edition: Michael Popruzhenko, *Sinodik zarja Borila* (Sofia, 1928). Partial translation into English: *MB*, 203–16.

[1–37 P & D: text of the Byzantine Synodikon].

38. (P) Because our most cunning enemy spread all over the Bulgarian land the Manichaean heresy, mixing it with the Masalian, to those with whom this heresy originated, anathema!
39. (P) To the priest Bogomil who, under the Bulgarian Tsar Peter, adopted this Manichaean heresy and spread it in the Bulgarian land adding to it that our God Christ was born of the holy Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary only in appearance, and was crucified only in appearance, and the flesh He took on he took up and left it in the air, to him and his past and present disciples called “apostles,” anathema!
40. (P) To all those who support this heresy, and to their customs, to their nocturnal gatherings and secret deeds, and to the useless teaching of theirs, as well as to those who join them, anathema!
41. (P) To those who like them and being in agreement with them eat and drink with them and receive gifts from them as like-minded [persons] anathema!
42. (P) To those who, on the twenty-fourth day of the month of June, the birthday of St John the Baptist, perform magical rites and drag fruits on the ground and perform awfully blasphemous mysteries in that night comparable to pagan services, anathema!
43. (P) To those who call Satan creator of the visible things and manager of rain, hail, and all that the earth gives birth to, anathema!
44. (P) To those who say that Satan created Adam and Eve, anathema!
45. (P) To those who reject the sacred scriptures that the God-seer Moses and Elijah the Tishbite and the rest of the holy prophets and patriarchs accepted from God and say that these are

from Satan, and that these [prophets], inspired by him [Satan] wrote what they wrote and uttered about Christ, and they did it unwillingly and under duress, and for that reason the Bogomils reject the books of the Old Testament and the holy prophets that shone in it, anathema!

46. (P) To those who say that the woman conceives in her womb with the assistance of Satan and Satan is present from that moment to the delivery of the baby and cannot be expelled through the holy baptism but only through prayer and fast, anathema!
47. (P) To those who mock St John the Baptist saying that he is from Satan and so is baptism with water and because of that they reject baptism with water and only say “Our Father,” anathema!
48. (P) To those who turn away from all singing in the holy and divine churches and even from the house of God itself, the church, and say that only “Our Father” is to be sang wherever it might be, anathema!
49. (P) To those who reject and mock the holy and sacred liturgy and the entire saintly order saying that they have been invented by Satan, anathema!
50. (P) To those who reject and mock the communion of the holy body of our Lord Jesus Christ, rejecting as well the entire mystery performed by our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, anathema!
51. (P) To those who reject the veneration of the holy and life-giving cross and the holy and sacred icons, anathema!
52. (P) To those who admit any of these heretics in the holy church of God before they have confessed and cursed this entire heresy, as it is said, anathema!
53. (P) To Basil the doctor, who disseminated this thrice-miserable Bogomil heresy in the city of Constantine in the time of the Orthodox Tsar Alexius Comnenus, anathema!
78. (P) To Peter of Cappadocia, “elder” of Sredec, and Lukas, and Mandelei of Radobol, anathema thrice!
79. (P) To all heretics, anathema!
80. (P) To those who do not believe righteously and piously in the Holy, Of-One-Essence, Life-giving, and Indivisible Trinity, and in the One True God, anathema!
81. (P) To all those who believe that the Son of our God Jesus Christ is lesser than and unequal to His eternal Father, anathema, thrice!

82. (P) To those who would not confess that the most Holy Spirit of God is equal in essence to the Father and the Son, anathema, thrice!
83. (P) To those who add to the divinity a fourth god and call it Confessor, anathema, thrice!
84. (P) To those who assert that the Son of God accepted incorruptible flesh from the most pure Virgin and Mother of Christ, anathema, thrice.
85. (P) To those who call the Virgin and Mother of God a simple woman, anathema, thrice.
86. (P) To those who do not confess from their soul that the Son of God ascended in the flesh to the Father, anathema, thrice.
87. (P) To those who do not believe that there will be resurrection and raising in the flesh of those dead for centuries and Second Coming with Last Judgment, anathema, thrice.
88. (P) To those who oppose the law of God and do not accept the apostolic and patristic legacy, anathema thrice.
89. (P) To those who quitted any heresy and joined the Orthodox faith and keep to it in their soul, eternal memory.
90. (P) To those who join the Armenian faith and to their services and fanciful words, anathema!
91. (P) (68 D) To those who say that God will not accept the penitent, anathema thrice!
92. (P) (69 D) To those who claim that the devil is the ruler of the world, anathema thrice!
93. (P) (70 D) To those who do not confess that the Son of God is the Creator of heaven and earth, anathema, thrice.
94. (P) (71 D) To those who do not believe in St John the Baptist and the rest of the prophets who preached about the Holy Trinity, anathema thrice!
95. (P) (72 D) To those who do not accept the holy communion as the true body and blood of Christ, anathema, thrice!
96. (P) (73 D) To those who do not venerate the holy relics, which confer various kinds of divine grace to everyone who come to them with faith, anathema thrice.
97. (P) (74 D) To those who do not worship the holy and life-giving cross and blaspheme about the holy liturgy and all ecclesiastical singing, anathema thrice!
98. (P) (75 D) To those who call the holy and divine churches where all Christendom is sanctified and renewed and God's name is praised simple houses, anathema thrice!

99. (P) (76 D) To those who try to take away or appropriate anything dedicated to God and donated to the holy churches, bishoprics, monasteries, or any other churches by the faithful tsars and God-fearing Christians and confirmed with gold-sealed charters or simple writings, anathema thrice!
100. (P) (77 D) To all those who hold to the Orthodox faith in a diligent and pure manner and believe that the high priests³⁷ are like the image of our Lord God Jesus Christ as per the words of God in the Gospel: “The one who listens to you listens to me,” and again: “Whatever you bind on earth etc.,” and strive to receive their blessings with warm faith, and fear their prohibitions, eternal memory, thrice!
101. (P) (78 D) To those who, through whatever trick, or herbs, or spell, or enchantment, or services to the enemy, or poison, attempt to harm the tsar, the anointed of God, to him anathema thrice!
102. (P) (79 D) To those who engage in magic, enchantments, spells and the uttering of prophecies, anathema thrice!
103. (P) (80 D) To all *bolijars*, lesser and greater, to the priests and the monks, and to the entire people who submit willingly to the tsar and the high priests and have a pure and loyal love for them, eternal memory!
104. (P) (81 D) To all thieves, murderers, and robbers and to those who assist them, anathema!
111. (P) To the thrice-cursed Bogomil and to his disciples Michael, Theodore, Dobre, Stephan, Basil, and Peter, and the rest of his disciples and fellow-travellers, who blasphemed that the Incarnation of Christ occurred only in appearance and that He did not accept the flesh from our holy and most pure Lady, the Mother of God, to all of them, anathema!
112. (P) To all high priests, bishops, priests, and monks, and all Bulgarian *bolijars* who gathered with Tsar Boril against this thrice-miserable heresy and crushed it, eternal memory! Thrice.
87. (D) Beginning of the Bulgarian tsars. To Boris, the first tsar of the Bulgarians, called in the holy baptism Michael, who brought the Bulgarian people to knowledge of God through

³⁷ Although not an official title, this was the usual reference to bishops, metropolitans, patriarchs and monastic leaders, as well as other members of the ecclesiastical elite.

the holy baptism, eternal memory. To his son Simeon and his grandson, Tsar St Peter, to Plenimir, Boris, Roman, Samuel, Radomir Gabriel, Vladimir, Vladislav, ancient Bulgarian tsars, who inherited the heavenly kingdom with the earthly one, eternal memory. To the ancient Bulgarian tsarina Maria, eternal memory.

88. (D) To Cyril the Philosopher, who translated the sacred scriptures from the Greek into the Bulgarian language and enlightened the Bulgarian people, the new second apostle, during the rule of Michael and his mother, the Orthodox tsarina Theodora, who adorned the Church of God with the holy icons and confirmed Orthodoxy, eternal memory.
89. (D) To his brother Methodius, Archbishop of Pannonian Moravia, for he too, labored much for the Slavic books, eternal memory.
90. (D) To his disciple Clement, Bishop of Great Morava, and his disciples Sava, Gorazd, and Naum, for they too, labored much for the Slavic books, eternal memory.
91. (D) To the Tsar Ioan Asen Belgun, who set the Bulgarian people free from Greek slavery, eternal memory.
92. (D) To his brother Theodore, called Peter, and to his brother Tsar Kaloyan, who won many victories over Greeks and Franks, eternal memory.
110. (P) (D 93) Under this tsar this Synodikon was translated from the Greek into Bulgarian.

After these [tsars] therefore, when their nephew on the female side, the most pious Tsar Boril took over the tsardom, the Bogomil heresy, thrice cursed and hateful to God, sprang out like an evil and thorny bush. Its originator then was the most blasphemous priest Bogomil and his disciples [who were] like Ianius and Iambrius who once upon a time opposed Moses.³⁸ Like cruel wolves they mercilessly wasted Christ's flock, for which He shed His most pure blood. When the most pious Tsar Boril learned about this, he was fired up by divine zeal and sent for them to be collected from all over his tsardom like certain weeds and sheaves and ordered that a council be convened. Then, when all the bishops, priests, and monks, as well as all the *bolijars* and a good many prominent people gathered together, and when the tsar heard

³⁸ The reference is unclear.

that they had come together, he immediately went out in his bright purple mantle and sat in one of the then large churches; the council sat around him. He promptly ordered those who had sown impiety to be brought in; however, he did not expose them at once, but caught them with great trickery, telling them to put aside all fear and bravely state their blasphemous teaching. Aiming to beguile the tsar and those with him, they laid out in detail their entire evil-bent heresy. The tsar and those with him confronted them with astute questions from the divine scriptures until their evil-inspired foolishness was exposed. And they, standing like fishes without a voice, were completely at a loss. The pious tsar, seeing them thus shamed and the devil fallen and vanquished, and Christ glorified, was filled with joy. He then ordered that they and those seduced by them be put under guard. And they, having seen this, went back to the conciliar church. Those among them who did not submit to the Orthodox council were subjected to different punishments and exile. After that the pious Tsar Boril ordered the conciliar act³⁹ to be translated from the Greek to his Bulgarian language. On his command this holy council was inserted among the Orthodox councils to be honored during the first Sunday of the Holy Fast, as the holy fathers decreed for the conciliar and apostolic church in the beginning. Before his reign no one else had convened such an Orthodox council. All this was decreed and done by the pious Tsar Boril in the year 6718 [1211], fourteenth *indiction*, the eleventh year of the moon eleven, the fifteenth year of the cycle of the sun, in the month of February, on the eleventh day, Friday [of week of] the Sunday of the Fast.⁴⁰ Having arranged all this well, our Orthodox tsar dismissed the council, entered the church, prayed to God and then let everyone go to their own province. To him eternal memory, three times!

94. (D) To those who laid down their souls for the speech-endowed flock of Christ our God and Savior, and shed their blood for the people of the Bulgarian tsardom, and exchanged the earthly kingdom for the heavenly one, eternal memory.
95. (D) To the pious Tsar George Terter the Older eternal memory.
96. (D) To the virtuously pious Tsar Shishman eternal memory.
97. (D) To the pious Tsar Theodor Svetoslav eternal memory.

³⁹ The Synodikon.

⁴⁰ The dating is after the Roman usage and reflects the influence of the union with Rome on the affairs of the Bulgarian Church.

98. (D) To the pious Tsar George Terter [the Younger] eternal [memory].
99. (D) To Despot Sratsimir and his brothers Radoslav and Dimiter eternal memory.
100. (D) To the pious Tsar Michael eternal memory.
101. (D) To Tsar Ioan Stephan, the son of the pious Tsar Michael, eternal memory.
102. (D) To these, then, righteous, pious, of blessed memory, and Orthodox tsars, who ruled over the God-protected throne of the Bulgarian tsardom and arranged everything in good order and took good care of the people who carry the name of Christ who have been entrusted to them by God... [lacuna].
113. (P) The great and pious Tsar Ioan Asen, son of the old Tsar Asen,⁴¹ who, having great love of God, glorified and illuminated the Bulgarian tsardom more than all of the former Bulgarian tsars, built monasteries and adorned them richly with gold, pearls, and many precious stones, presented all holy and divine churches with many gifts and declared that they have full freedoms [from obligations], dignified with great honors the members of the ecclesiastical estate, the high priests, the priests, and the deacons. With an even greater zeal he sought to renew the patriarchy of the Bulgarian tsardom. This is how the renewal happened:

The most sanctified oecumenical Patriarch German,⁴² by God's will and on account of the great zeal on the part of the Christ-loving great Tsar Ioan Asen, son of the old Asen, with the rest of his brothers and patriarchs, Athanasius, most sanctified patriarch of Jerusalem of Christ's passions and His Resurrection, the holy Church of Sion, mother of all churches and all of Palestine⁴³ Simeon, most sanctified patriarch of the city of God Antioch and all of Syria;⁴⁴ Nicolas, most sanctified patriarch of Alexandria and all Egypt.⁴⁵ These most sanctified patriarchs, then, received a message sent to them by the pious Greek Tsar Kaloyan Ducas,⁴⁶ written in this manner: "Our autocratic

⁴¹ Ioan Asen II (1218–1241).

⁴² German (1222–1240), officially patriarch of Constantinople, had his residence in Nicaea since his see was occupied by the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

⁴³ Athanasius, patriarch of Jerusalem (?–1235).

⁴⁴ Simeon II, patriarch of Antioch (1206–post 1235).

⁴⁵ Nicholas I, patriarch of Alexandria (1210–1243).

⁴⁶ Ioan III Ducas Vatatzes (1222–1254).

tsardom begs and calls on you fathers to fulfill our plea to you. Put together a message and send it to my tsardom in confirmation of your and my decision to declare and grant to the city of Tarnov the rank of a patriarchy equal to yours: to the church of the Ascension of Christ, the mother of the churches in the Bulgarian tsardom, because the Christ-loving Bulgarian Tsar Ioan Asen, brother and in-law of my tsardom, insisting, requests of our tsardom and our holy fathers that this is granted to his tsardom.”

After the most sanctified patriarchs read this epistle they considered it a good decision and each of them gave to the tsar’s messengers their assent. Also, they sent a message to the oecumenical Patriarch German, telling him the following: “To German, oecumenical patriarch and our brother, greetings. We received what you sent us and deeming it a good decision, we offer to your love the signatures of our testimony. Father, do what is pleasing to you and ourselves for you have the power of the higher see.”

When the Greek tsar and the patriarch received that, [they] gathered the metropolitans, the archbishops, the bishops, the most honorable monks, the archimandrites, and the abbots of his entire tsardom. In the same way, the Christ-loving tsar of the Bulgarians Ioan Asen [called] the metropolitans, the archbishops, the bishops, and the most honorable monks of the Holy Mountain [of Athos] of his entire tsardom. They gathered with the eastern Tsar Kaloyan on the Pontian Sea⁴⁷ and proclaimed as patriarch the saintly meek and holy man, famous on account of his heremitic life and deeds, the previously ordained Archbishop Joachim;⁴⁸ not only verbally, but with a writing by patriarch German as well, signed by all the eastern patriarchs. [This] was sealed with a seal and given to the pious tsar and the then newly sanctified patriarch Joachim, for an eternal and inalienable record. For that reason, therefore, we wrote these things for all Orthodox [people], for the information of those who listen, and for the memory of the Bulgarian nation. To this great and pious Ioan Asen, tsar of all Bulgarians, eternal memory!

⁴⁷ In Lampsak on the Asian side of the Nicaean domain. Ioan Asen II remained on the European coast of the Sea of Marmara while the ceremony took place.

⁴⁸ Indication that Joachim had been proclaimed archbishop of Tarnov and Primas Besarion had stepped down.

114. (P) To the faithful Tsar Kaliman and his brother Michael, Tamar, and Elena, pious children of the great Tsar Asen, eternal memory.
115. (P) To *Sevastocrator* Alexander, brother of the great Tsar Asen, to *Sevastocrator* Strez and Despot Slay, eternal [memory].
116. (P) To Constantine, our pious and Orthodox tsar... [lacuna].
117. (P) To Elena, the new and pious tsarina, mother of the great Tsar Ioan Asen, who adopted angelic image and was named Eugenia, eternal memory.
118. (P) To Tsarina Ana, named Anisia, and the other Ana, pious tsarina of the Christ-loving Tsar Asen, and to Irina, pious mother of the Christ-loving Tsar Michael, named in monastic image Xenia, eternal memory.
119. (P) To Maria, Christ-loving tsarina of Terter the Older, and to the faithful Tsarina Kira Maria, eternal memory.
120. (P) To Euphrosina, pious tsarina of Tsar Svetoslav, eternal memory.
121. (P) To Keraza, pious *despina*, mother of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, who later adopted angelic image and was named Theophana, eternal memory.
122. (P) To Theodora, pious tsarina of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, who later adopted the angelic monastic image and was named Theophana, eternal memory.
123. (P) To Theodora, pious tsarina of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, who was of the Jewish people, but adopted the holy baptism and kept to her pious faith, renewed many churches, built several monasteries, and was the mother of the great Tsar Ioan Shishman, eternal memory.
124. (P) To Kera Tamar, daughter of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, a great lady and spouse of the great Amir Amurat who, given to him on behalf of the Bulgarian people went there, kept her Orthodox faith, liberated her people, lived well and in piety, and died in peace, eternal memory.
125. (P) To lady Desislava and lady Vasilisa, daughters of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, eternal memory.
126. (P) To Kira Maria, pious tsarina of the great Tsar Ioan Shishman, eternal memory.
127. (P) To lady Desislava, mother of the pious Tsarina Maria, [spouse] of the great Tsar Ioan Shishman, named in the angelic image Devora, eternal memory.

128. (P) To Keraza, daughter of the great Tsar Ioan Shishman, eternal memory, and to his son Asen, and to his other son Asen, and to the other deceased children of his, eternal [memory].
129. (P) To Domza, mother-in-law to the great Voevoda of Vlachia Ioan Negoia, eternal memory.
130. (P) To *logothetisa* Zoe eternal memory.
131. (P) To the monk Silvester, who used to be a *tchashnik*⁴⁹ of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, eternal memory.
132. (P) To the monk Theodosius, who used to be *protosevast* of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, eternal [memory].
133. (P) To the *protokilijnik* Prodanko, eternal [memory].
134. (P) To the *protokilijnik* Prijazd and the *voevoda* Baldju, who were killed for the faith of their lord, eternal memory.
135. (P) To the *Great Primikure* Tzamlak, eternal memory.
136. (P) To the *Great Voevoda* Constantine, who was named Theodule in the monastic image, eternal memory.
137. (P) To the Great... Dobromir, named in the monastic image Doroteus, eternal memory.

.....

Most holy patriarchs of Tarnov:

140. (P) Patriarchs of Preslav. To Leontios, Demetrios, Sergius, and Gregory, Patriarchs of Preslav, eternal memory.
141. (P) To the first patriarch⁵⁰ of the God-saved city of Tarnov, Joachim, eternal memory.
142. (P) To the most sanctified Patriarchs Basil [II?], Joachim [II], and Ignatios, eternal memory.
143. (P) To the most blessed patriarch and saintly martyr Macarius⁵¹ eternal memory.
144. (P) To the sanctified patriarchs Joachim [III], Dorotei, Roman, and Theodosius, eternal memory.
145. (P) To the most sanctified Patriarch Joanikios eternal memory.
146. (P) To the most sanctified Patriarch Simeon eternal memory.
147. (P) To the most sanctified Patriarch Theodosius eternal memory.

⁴⁹ Slavic rendering of the Greek *epikerni*, cup-bearer.

⁵⁰ The Synodikon skips the uniate heads of the Bulgarian Church Basil and Besarion.

⁵¹ Macarius was executed on the orders of Tsar Todor Svetoslav (1300–1321) for unclear reasons.

148. (P) To the most sanctified Patriarch Joanikios eternal memory.
149. (P) To the most sanctified Patriarch Euthymius eternal memory.
150. (P) Metropolitans of Preslav: Stephan, Demetrius, Leo, Gregorius, Gerasim, Aaron, Meletius, Makarius, Sava, Dorotheus, Visarion, Makarius.
151. (P) Metropolitans of Tcherven: Neophit, Calinik, Zaccaria.
152. (P) Metropolitans of Lovech: Longinus, Meletius, Cyprian, Simeon and the other Simeon, [Dometian and Parthenius].
153. (P) Metropolitans of Sredec [Sofia]: Dionisius, Damian, Leontius, Dometian and Partenius.⁵²
154. (P) Metropolitans of Ovech: Theostirict, Lazar.
155. (P) Metropolitans of Dristra: + Kiril, Averkius, Theodul, Joseph, Dionisius, Kalinik.

The pious metropolitans that we will mention now were under the pious Tsar Asen under the power of the Patriarchy of Tarnov and then died:

156. (P) Anthonius and Daniel, metropolitans of Ser, eternal memory.
157. (P) Anastasius, Epiphanius, and Demetrius, bishops of Velbuzd, eternal memory.
158. (P) Joanikius and Sergius, archbishops of Ohrid, eternal memory.
159. (P) Jacob, Porphyrius, and Joanikius, bishops of Branichevo, eternal [memory].
160. (P) Sava, Theodosius, Demetrius, and Simeon, bishops of Belgrade, eternal memory.
161. (P) Cyril and Dionisius, bishops of Nish, eternal memory.
162. (P) Stephan, Clement, Joseph, Hariton, bishops of Bdin [Vidin], eternal memory.
163. (P) Simeon, metropolitan of Philippi, eternal memory.
164. (P) Basil, Mark, Nikodim, Proclus, Dorotheus, and Partenius, metropolitans of Mesembria [Nesebar], eternal memory.
165. (P) To all Bulgarian metropolitans and bishops, archimandrits and abbots who died in the faith, eternal [memory].
166. (P) To all *bolijars*, small and great, fighters for the faith and friends of the holy and divine Church of the Bulgarian tsardom, eternal memory.

⁵² Scribal error: the last two are listed here instead of in #152.

167. (P) To Semir, Ioncho, Dobromir, Ivansho and to all those who along with them displayed courage against the godless Turks and shed their blood for the Orthodox Christian faith, eternal memory.
168. (P) To Arzo, Troshan, Raten and his brother Karach, Potraz, Hanko, Stan, Michael, Bogdan, Shishman, Botul, Radoslav, Voisil, Constantine, Godeslav, Tchnoglav, [eternal memory].
169. (P) To the newly sanctified great King Stephen Urosh eternal memory.
170. (P) To King Valkashin eternal memory.
171. (P) To Despot Uglesha eternal memory.
172. (P) To the Moldovian Lord Stephen eternal memory.
173. (P) To the Moldovian Lord Ioan Peter eternal memory.
174. (P) To his lady Elena, and to their children, eternal memory.
175. (P) To all those who rob the houses of Christians or steal horses or oxen, or rob on the roads for the harm and loss of Christians, and to all those who send them to [do] such evils or know they are such and cover them, anathema.
176. (P) To Akindin, Barlaam, and the priest Prohor Kidonis who uttered more blasphemes against God than all the heretics, and blasphemed as well that the divine light which appeared to the disciples on Mount Tabor and was shown to the disciples by the Savior to testify before all how at the resurrection the righteous ones will shine and will be transformed and will be for all ages with the Lord, as the apostle teaches us, to them and the impious adversaries of the Lord's word, and to their fellow-travellers, anathema thrice.
177. (P) To Phudul and his teacher Piropul who trampled upon the most honorable icons of the most pure Mother of God, busied themselves with all kinds of magic, slandered the bishops, the priests, and the monks, polluted the holy churches and the life-giving cross through which we are marked for salvation, and committed many other iniquities, anathema.

Memorial lists of Bulgarian tsars and their consorts, late medieval copies.

Maintaining memorial lists of sponsors and donors was one of the chief ways in which ecclesiastical foundations repaid favors by lay people, and royal charters frequently mention such ceremonial remembrances as conditions of granting properties and exemptions. The memorial lists below are compilations accumulated over the centuries, but in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries

copies they are extant their function was, besides fulfilling their pledge to the donors, to preserve the memory of the Bulgarian state tradition. The names of the tsars are interspersed with names of members of their families and other powerful lords. Edition: Jordan Ivanov, "Pomennitsi na balgarski zare i zarizi," *Izvestija na Istoricheskoto Druzhestvo*, 4 (1915), 219–229 (excerpts).

[Memorial list from the church of Bojana]:

Lord, remember the pious tsars: tsar Boris, tsar Simeon, tsar Roman, tsar Peter, tsar Samuel, tsar Radomir, tsar Gabriel, tsar Iasen, tsar Kaloyan, tsar Peter, tsar Boril, tsar Alexander, tsar Ioan Asen, tsar Kaliman, tsar Michael, tsar Alexander, tsar Constantine, tsar Simeon, tsar Shegmon, tsar despot Jacob, tsar George, tsar Terterii his son, tsar Michael, tsar despot Kuman, tsar Theodore Svetoslav, tsar Alexander, tsar Asen, tsar Sratsimir, Vladislav his brother, tsar Stephan, tsar lord Shishman, tsar Iasen, Michael his brother, tsar Sratsimir, tsar Constantine, tsar Iasen, tsar Fruzhin. And here is the memory of the Orthodox tsarinas: tsarina Ana, tsarina Eugenia, the nun Xenia, tsarina Elena, tsarina Kera Maria, tsarina Irina, tsarina Keratsa, tsarina Maria, tsarina Euphrosina, the nun Theodosia, tsarina Theodora, tsarina Maria, tsarina Theodora, tsarina Ana, tsarina Xenia, tsarina Ephrosina.

[Memorial list from the monastery of Poganovo]:

Lord, remember Tsar Konostan. Remember, Lord: tsar Boris, tsar Simeon, tsar Peter, Roman, tsar Samuel, tsar Radomir, tsar Gabriel, tsar Iasen, tsar Kaloyan, tsar Peter, tsar Boril, tsar Alexander, tsar Constantine, tsar Simeon, tsar Jacob, tsar George, tsar despot Kuman, tsar Terter, tsar Theodore, tsar Terter his son, tsar Alexander, tsar Michael, tsar Alexander, tsar Asen, tsar Sratsimir, his brother despot Vladislav, his master, tsar Stephan, tsar Shishman, tsar Asen, tsar Constantine, tsar Michael, his brother, tsar Sratsimir, tsar Constantine, tsar Asen.

Saints' Lives and Eulogies

135 *Short (Prologue) Lives of St John of Rila, thirteenth century.*

The short *Lives* of the popular saint were composed shortly after the *translatio* of his relics to Tarnov, the capital of the restored Bulgarian state, in 1195. Drawing on the *Popular Life* of St John and the *Life* of George Skylitzes the *Lives* reflect the strong patriotic feeling of their authors, emphasize the continuity with the First Bulgarian Tsardom, and call on the saint to protect and strengthen the Bulgarians and their ruling dynasty. They became part of a popular thirteenth-century genre, collections of short saints' *Lives* read on a

certain month (*Minei*) or compendiums for the entire year (*Prologue*). The first two *Lives* are extant each in only one copy in thirteenth-century manuscripts. The third *Life* is extant in a large number of Bulgarian, Serbian, Russian, Moldavian, and Vlach manuscripts from the late fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Edition: Ivanov, “Lives of St Ioan of Rila,” 52–7 and 58 (the *Lives* in *Dragan’s Minei* and *Stishen [Verse] Prologue*), and Klementina Ivanova, “Dve neizdadeni starobalgarski zhitija,” *Literaturna Istorija*, 1 (1977), 60–61 (the *Life* in *Norov’s Prologue*).

Life of St John *from Dragan’s Minei, late thirteenth century.*

On the same day [October 19th] memory of our blessed father John of Rila. Our blessed father John was Bulgarian by birth, born and raised in the village called Skrino. He left the world and the things that are of the world and fell in love with the angelic life. He gave away all of his father’s property to the destitute, went out and settled in the desert of Rila, as is written:

You left behind all grief, father John,
and rushed to the divine corner-stone, Christ,
and accomplished many feats of vigils, fast, and prayer;
[you] suffered cold and hunger in the desert, father.
The Lord fed you with wild chickpeas [which] haven’t seen the plow,⁵³
for you willingly took on yourself a heavy burden
and suffered much afflictions from the demons.

He accomplished many feats in the years of Tsar Peter. After he passed away, they searched for him in the desert of Rila. Pious people sent by Tsar Peter found him. With honor and great praises as well as psalms and spiritual songs they translated his most honorable body to Sredets [Sofia].⁵⁴ After some time, by the will of the divine providence, Sredets was taken over by the Hungarians; the saint was transported to Hungary.⁵⁵ A certain bishop lacked faith, and the bishop lost his sight, for he said: “We cannot find him in the ancient writings.” Then he prayed

⁵³ The Slavic term is *slanutak*.

⁵⁴ Ivan Dujchev argues that the *translatio* of St John’s relics to Sofia occurred in 969–972; the year 1068–1070 have been offered as well, in accordance with the mentioning of Constantin Diogenes.

⁵⁵ The relics of the saint were transported to Estergom ca. 1183 and were returned back to Sofia in 1187. Sofia was still Byzantine at the time and the return of the relics was a gesture of good will by Bella III who had just married his daughter to Emperor Isaac II Angelos.

for a long time, tearfull and on his knees, and regained his sight. After that, the Hungarians returned his relics to Sredets.

A long time after that God willed to raise again the fallen tent [*skinia*] of the Bulgarian tsardom and promoted the new offshoot, the Christ-loving Tsar Asen, who renewed the Bulgarian people. Tsar Asen came to Sredets, found St John, the great desert-dweller, and desired to compete with the ancient tsars, that is, Tsar Constantine and Tsar Peter.⁵⁶ He lifted up the body of the most honorable and blessed father John and transported him to the city of Tarnov. There he laid him to rest in his own monastery, build in Trapesitsa, where he lies bodily until this time and incessantly works miracles for those who come to his casket in faith.

Life of St John *from* Norov's Prologue, *thirteenth-century copy*.

On the same day [October 19th] is the memory of our blessed father John of Rila. This holy John lived in the days of the faithful Tsar Peter and hailed from the village called Skiront.⁵⁷ He left his native place and entered [the mountain] by the river called Rila. There he found a cave, called Vartopen, and lived in it for many years.⁵⁸ He was much troubled by demons and apparitions, some inciting the people against him, others screaming under the rock. But he went through all of this with God's grace and, thanking God, yielded up his spirit to the Lord.

When the faithful Tsar Peter heard about his death he came, took his honorable relics and brought them to the city of Sredets. Here he built a church in his name and laid down his relics with great honors.

Three hundred years later the faithful Tsar Asen stirred himself, came to Sredets, took the relics of the saint, transported them to Zagorie and laid them down in the city of Trapezitsa,⁵⁹ where he had built a church in his name. They still lay here and procure healing to this very day.

⁵⁶ Asen I took Sredets in 1195; the tsars are Emperor Constantine the Great (324–337) and the Bulgarian Tsar Peter (927–970).

⁵⁷ Skirino, as the *Folk Life* correctly has it.

⁵⁸ This is the only mention of the name of the cave.

⁵⁹ The hill of Trapezitsa was one of the suburbs of the capital Tarnov, opposite the main hill of Tsarevets.

Life of John of Rila *from the Stishen* (Sofia) Prologue.

On the same day [October 19th] is the memory of our blessed father John of Rila. The holy and blessed father of ours John, the great among the desert-dwellers, was born in the province of the glorious city of Sredets, in the village called Skrino, during the reigns of the Christ-loving Bulgarian Tsar Peter and the Greek [Tsar] Constantine Diogenis.⁶⁰ His parents were of the Bulgarian tribe and were pious and not very wealthy. When his parents left this world, he, having loved virtue since his youth, gave away his share of his father's property to the poor and the sick. Then he left his native place with nothing but a leather shirt on his back.⁶¹ He climbed a certain high and deserted mountain and there he excelled in virtue, feeding himself on wild plants.

Not long afterwards, at the instigation of the devil, robbers fell upon him, beat him severely, and drove him away from that place. He left the mountain and settled in the desert of Rila. Here he accomplished a tough feat: he entered a hollow tree trunk and lived there in fast, prayer, and tears, praying to God incessantly. He partook of plant food just enough to support his needs; he did not see a human's face but lived with the wild beasts. God saw his great patience and commanded wild chickpeas to sprout there; on this food the blessed one lived for a long time.

Then some shepherds spotted him and spread the news everywhere. Many came to him bringing along their sick. They got well through the prayers of the saint and went back home [by themselves]. The glory of the saint spread all over the land and many wished to join in his virtuous living and dwell with him. They made a church in a near-by cave and built a monastery. The venerable was their tutor and shepherd. He fed his flock on good pastures, lived into ripe old age, reached the end of his life in peace, re-settled into the unaging bliss, and was buried here by his disciples.

Shortly after that he appeared to his disciples and ordered them to transport his relics to the city of Sredets. They opened the grave and beheld the body of the venerable being still whole and untouched by

⁶⁰ Constantine Diogenes was governor of Thessaloniki and later of the Byzantine theme of Bulgaria, covering portions of modern southwestern Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, and northern Greece in the second half of the twelfth century. The author confuses him with Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenete (913–959).

⁶¹ Thus indicating his status of a holy hermit, in the manner of the prophet Elijah (3 Kings 19:19) and John the Baptist (Matthew 3:4).

corruption and emitting a sweet odor. They praised God and transported it to Sredets with honors, where they laid it down in the church of the holy apostle and Gospel-writer Luke. Later, a beautiful church was erected for him; they moved there the blessed one, who worked miraculous and most amazing healings.

After a long time, the Hungarian king advanced and won a great victory. He came and enslaved the Greek land, reached Sredec and took the casket of the blessed one, for even he had heard about the miracles of the blessed one. He ordered the casket to be transported with great honors to his land and to be laid down with honor in the church of the city of Ostrigom [Estergom].

After the saint was left there he did not cease to work miracles and portents and healings. Let us mention just a fraction of what that he did. When the archbishop of Ostrigom heard that the blessed one is great before God and praised in all countries for his miracles he did not believe it, but said: "I do not know that this one is mentioned in the ancient scriptures!" He did not want to go and bow before him. Suddenly, he lost the ability to use his tongue. He promptly figured out the reason and immediately rushed to the casket of the blessed one and fell on his knees before him, kissing him and begging forgiveness. The beloved of God quickly untied what has been tied up and granted him clear speech back again. Now healed, he confessed to everyone, suffused in tears, his sin against the saint, praising God and glorifying the blessed one. The saint performed many other miracles in the Hungarian land. When the king saw all that, he marveled at the most glorious miracles of the saint. Moreover, he was seized by great terror. He adorned the casket of the saint with gold and silver, kissed his relics, and with great honors sent him back to Sredets. There he was laid down in his holy church, in the year 6695 [1187], fifth *indiction*.

Shortly thereafter, when God willed to elevate the fallen tent [*skimia*] and renew the Bulgarian state which had been destroyed by the Greek violence, [He] raised the Bulgarian tsardom under the Christ-loving Tsar Asen, whose name in the holy baptism is Ioan.⁶² He, therefore, in the beginning of his reign renewed and strengthened the ruined cities of Bulgaria. He forged ahead, capturing towns and conquering provinces. When he came to Sredets and conquered it and saw the holy blessed father and heard about his most glorious feats, he bowed

⁶² Ioan Asen I (1187–1197), who was of Coumanian origins.

before his holy casket, and kissed his most honorable relics. He then ordered the holy Patriarch Basil and his clergy to take the most glorious casket and carry it before him it with great honor to the imperial city of Tarnov.⁶³ He appointed three hundred picked soldiers to accompany the saint. Patriarch Basil loaded the honorable casket on a cart; all those who were with him set off with great joy and jubilation and walked guided by the prayers of the saint and praising God. With them went the dwellers of his holy monastery, the abbot Ioanikius and his God-fearing monks.

The pious Tsar Ioan hastened to arrive ahead of them in the imperial city and ordered that a church was quickly built for the saint in the city of Trapesitsa. When he learned that Patriarch Basil and those with him who carried the saint were getting close, the tsar himself went out to meet him by Okop.⁶⁴ With the tsar went all of the *bolijars*, many magnates, and a great multitude of people, celebrating bodily and exulting in spirit. When they saw him, they bowed down to the relics of the blessed father and rejoiced with undescrivable joy.

The casket of the blessed remained at Okop for seven days until the church was completed. When it was finished, they carried the saint and laid him there with great honor and consecrated the church in the God-approved way in the year 6703 [1195]. There the miracle-working body of the saint lies to this very day and gushes forth an eternal spring of healings. The blind who come in faith see again the light of day; the lame walk again; the mute quickly become eloquent; the handicapped get transformed and strong; those afflicted by demons get cured; and all who come and suffer from some sickness become healthy again.

Oh, most honorable head full with the grace of the Holy Spirit, dwelling of the Savior and the Father, you, who stand before the throne of the Tsar of Tsars and openly enjoy the light of the Holy Trinity and offer, together with the cherubs, the thrice-holy song with great and tested daring: Pray to the most merciful Lord to save your connationals, your kin, the Bulgarian people, help our mighty tsar, and throw the enemies who oppose him under his feet!

⁶³ Archbishop Basil, the prelate who adopted the union with Rome under Kaloyan (1197–1207) in 1204, is traditionally called patriarch.

⁶⁴ The reference to Okop is unique.

Guard our uncorrupted faith!
 Strengthen our cities!
 Bring peace to the entire world!
 Deliver us from famine and death!
 Save us from the incursions of foreigners!
 Console the elderly!
 Guide the youth!
 Grant wisdom to the foolish!
 Take mercy on the widows!
 Protect the orphans!
 Raise the babies!

Protect all of your people from the terrors of the day of the Last Judgment and deliver them from the [wrath of the] left side and grant them, through your prayers, to be counted among the sheep on the right side so that they hear that blessed voice of the Lord Christ: “Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom that has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world!”⁶⁵ Because to Him is glory, honor, and power in the ages without end, amen!

136 *Canon for St John of Rila.*

Shortly after 1195 when the relics of St John of Rila were transported to Tarnov or during the early thirteenth century a *Service* and a *Canon* were composed in his honor. The *Service* is a typical example of hymnographic praise that could have been offered to any Christian saint. The *Canon*, however, is fairly specific in grounding the saint in time and place, stressing his feats during the brief sojourn of his relics in Hungary. As Klimentina Ivanova has pointed out, the *Canon* used the *Life* of the saint by George Skylitzes and served, in its turn, as a source for the first *Short Life of St John*. The *Canon* is incorporated into a late-thirteenth century service of the saint. Edition: Klementina Ivanova, “Neizvestni sluzhbi na Ioan Rilski i Mihail Voin,” *Izvestija na Instituta za balgarski ezik* 18 (1975), 211–236.

First Song

Praising the One God in the Holy Trinity, father,
 together with the angelic choirs,
 with your patience you become like them,
 grant me now your grace,
 to sing about the miracles,
 with which God glorified you.

⁶⁵ After Matthew 25:34.

You have been a blessed man when,
 during your entire life, blessed John,
 you instructed yourself in the divine law,
 and like a tree planted by soul-saving waters,
 paid off with divine fruit:
 your supernatural miracles.

You turned yourself into
 a hospitable home for the Holy Spirit, full of divine virtues
 you, the foremost blessed one!
 This is why now in your church
 you offer to all those who ask
 the source of constant stream of miracles.

To the Mother of God

The one who fulfilled the divinity of the Father
 the Son, the divine Word,
 in your womb resided, Virgin
 and having taken human nature through you,
 granted to all His salvation.

Third Song

The abundance of your miracles,
 which you worked while still alive,
 proclaims louder than a trumpet
 your life, resembling that of angels:
 you fed a multitude with a handful of flour,
 and wild chick-peas whose roots have seen no plow,
 oh father John.

From afflictions terrible and manyfold,
 were delivered all those who came
 to the one who resided in the mountain, living in a hollow trunk,
 for the blind regained their sight,
 the lame stood up and walked,
 people with dried limbs regained their strength, father.

The city of Sredets felt
 the righteous wrath of God,
 Andronikos, the Greeks' tormentor
 by Providence's will gave you up to the Hungarian king

who worshipfully
transported your casket, father.

To the Mother of God

Raised on celestial bread
from the hand of Archangel Gabriel,
through his voice in our times
you turned into a feast of life,
carrying the life-giving bread
which you have kneaded, Virgin.

Fourth Song

The speed of the most tormenting cruelty
of Andronikos who angered God
subjected Sredec, along with other cities,
to the host of Hungarian warriors
and they carried away your casket, o blessed one,
but you carried miracles.

Like a treasure more precious than new gold
the Hungarian land received, blessed John
your divine casket, containing the holiness,
and overflowed with divine joy
for this reason, singing the psalms, it thanked God
who honored it with such grace.

Abiding to the law that God required
the one who transported you preached your grace
to the high priest of Estergom, oh blessed one,
and invited him to bow down to you
but he demonstrated disbelief and said
that he had not seen you in the ancient writings.

To the Mother of God

When He wished to show his immeasurable power,
God created out of nothing the angels and the heavens
the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon,
the stars and all living beings;
Being greater than anything else, He
entered your womb Himself and took on the flesh, Virgin
and made you more honored than anyone else.

Fifth Song

He did not understand that God has given you grace
and we are to bow to your relics:
the archbishop spurned you back then
and the gates of his mouth were immediately shut down,
for he became mute.

Considering how to get cure
for the sickness of the throat that impeded his voice,
he offered himself to doctors
but three whole days later,
the affliction was still there.

Unable to free himself from the shackle on his tongue
by either medicine or treatment,
the high priest of blasphemy begged for forgiveness
and for speedy [access] to your ears. That same night,
by God's grace you made him eloquent [again].

To the Mother of God

Because it was you, oh pure one,
who of your body gave flesh to the One and meek God,
console and deliver your servants from afflictions,
fulfill our desire for goodness,
and grant us forgiveness for our sins.

Sixth Song

The generosity of your gift
the high priest of God did not keep secret,
but suffused with tears many times he told about
how the shackles on his tongue had been removed, oh blessed one.

Great and marvelous are You among the holy, Lord,
for you glorified John, the disciple of the desert
with miracles in the province of Sredets,
and with signs in the land of Hungary.

A half-death, barely alive Hungarian,
with paralyzed body and limbs,
came to you from afar, laid upon a cart,
but cured, turned back from the middle of the road!

To the Mother of God

Golden candelabre and light of lights,
 filled with the grace of seven spirits
 are you, Mother of God; enlighten my soul
 and deliver me from fire and darkness!

Seventh Song

Because the one who was cured on the cart in the middle of the
 road
 did not give proper thanks to you,
 who untied the bonds of his affliction,
 he was hit by an even harsher sickness
 as punishment for his foolishness, oh blessed one.

His mind darkened by pain, as if wounded in battle,
 he was laid back on the cart like cargo
 and he, the sick man, strove to reach you,
 and again, he was cured on the road,
 but when he reached you, he praised you, oh blessed one.

Father, you became the source of the virtue-giving waters
 of the divine spirit, because the hand
 of the woman who came to your casket
 you infused with health
 and filled the souls of the Hungarians with fear [of God].

To the Mother of God

You accepted in your divine womb
 like a bright and shiny cloud oh Virgin,
 God, who rides the clouds and lords it over the winds,
 and became the dwelling of the sun of glory:
 grant us to see His light!

Eight Song

With a mix of mud and saliva the God-Man
 healed the eyes of the man who was born blind:
 he now glorifies you in the Hungarian land
 through the grace of your labors!
 You gave eyes to the woman who came to your casket
 and the divine sign makes you special among the new [saints].

You despised all earthly things, oh blessed one
and became guardian of Christ's glad tidings.
You resolved to follow His commandments in everything,
and that is why you healed the burned eyes of the woman,
when the divine Gospels were pronounced
at the time of the secret sacrifice.

John, you became like the pillar of fire,
confirmed on heaven and earth through [your] divine virtues,
divinely guiding on the celestial paths
all those who gaze toward the light of your life.
This is why we, gathered together, bow to you
as befits a great miracle-maker and image of salvation.

To the Mother of God

Instead of Adam—God, and in the place of Eve are you, oh Virgin,
Gabriel replaces the serpent of deceit, the cross the three,
and the garden of the sepulcher—Paradise.
“Rejoice!” replaces grief, the spear is in the place of the sword of
fire;
the scarlet cloth supplants the fig leaf.
It is you, the only Mother of God, that we the faithful praise!

Ninth Song

Now freed from the corporeal image, hermit,
and having left behind the world with its pain,
you present yourself to the One God about whom Moses foretold;
you now gaze at the divine glory—
face to face, as Paul writes.
Make [us], the singers, sons of the Light.

As a true and tested servant of the Word of God
you became a living source of health,
because for those who believe in Him, through the gift of the divine
power,
spiritual grace gushes forth like a river from the casket;
through it you are glorified John,
with marvelous miracles.

To the ancient omens oh John the Miracle-maker
with which you enlightened the city of Sredec

your new ones I collected and added,
 the ones you performed among the Hungarians, doing pious good
 deeds
 because it was Providence's will that your casket went there,
 so that you pour your miracles there as well, oh blessed one.

You emulated the disciples of the Lord unflinchingly
 and received an equal grace to work miracles,
 for you free the people from afflictions
 drive away unclean spirits, move those suffering from paralysis,
 and give the light to the blind.
 Grant forgiveness for my sins as well!

137 *Short (Prologue) Life of St Petka [Paraskeve] of Tarnov.*

The cult of St Petka (Byzantine: Paraskeve) of Tarnov became prominent in thirteenth-century Bulgaria and spread widely in southeastern Europe. St Paraskeve was a tenth-century Byzantine hermit from Epivat in the province of Kalikratia. She remained largely a local holy figure until, in the mid-twelfth century, Patriarch Nicolas IV Muzalon (1147–1151) requested a new *Life* to be composed for her, perhaps testifying to her growing popularity in Byzantine Thrace. Soon after the battle of Klokotnitsa, most likely in July 1231, the victorius Ioan Asen II transported her relics to Tarnov and she became patron saint of the capital city. After the Ottoman conquest her relics journeyed to Vidin, Belgrade, Constantinople, and Iash (Romania), spreading the cult along. The short *Life* was composed for the need of her service in Bulgaria and combines a Bulgarian translation of the twelfth century Byzantine *Life* by Deacon Basilik with an original Bulgarian segment added to commemorate the transfer of the relics to Tarnov and invoke the help of the saint on behalf of her new devotees, the Bulgarian people. It is extant in fourteenth-century copies and relates to the historical account about the *translatio* of the saint. Editions: Emil Kažužniacki, *Žur älteren Paraskevalitteratur der Griechen, Slaven, und Rumänen*, (Vienna, 1899), 52–54; B. Angelov, “Starobalgarski tekstove. IV. Prolozhno zhitie na Petka Tarnovska,” *Izvestija na Arhivnija Institut pri BAN*, 1 (1957), 290–92.

On the same day [October 14th] is the memory of the holy and blessed Paraskeve. This holy and blessed Paraskeve hailed from the village of Epivat, [in the district of] the city of Kalikratia, and was the daughter of faithfull parents, who were neither too wealthy nor too powerful, nor were they afflicted by poverty.

When she came of age she took a firm decision to embrace the angelic life. She left her parents and friends and all those who lived in the world and followed Christ. Borne on the wings of virtue, she settled in the desert and remained there attached to silent life, which

was, indeed, angelic, and tormented her body with fast and vigils. There she had no food and drink; tears and incessant prayers were her nourishment and sustenance. Spending all of her life in this way she enlightened herself with virtue in that place and lived a worthy life. Her reason and conscience were joined and bound together and were always aiming high. She did not wish to affiliate herself to none one of this world but dwelled focused on the Lord and toiled along the steep and difficult road.

When she felt that her end was near, she left the desert and set off for Constantinople. She visited all the holy places and spent a short while there; then she went back to her native place, Kalikratia, and there she yielded up her blessed spirit in the hands of the living God and accepted the distinction of the heavenly crown.

It happened that in that time a certain sailor was afflicted by a deadly disease. He soon died and they buried him by a tower. His grave emitted such a foul odor that no one dared go down that road. A hermit dwelled in that place and he had to get down from the tower and bury the corpse deeper to get rid of the stench.⁶⁶ Other people heard about that and [wishing to help] took the body from the roadside [and began digging] to bury it right next to the body of the saint. When they saw her body—whole, perfectly preserved, and sound—they marveled. Then they thought that if that body had been holy, God would have revealed it through miracles, and so they went away, leaving the body there.

However, one of them, by the name of George, had a marvelous and terrifying dream: a certain queen sat on a throne and a multitude of officials were about her. At this sight he was seized by terror and fell down on his face. One of the bright men took him by the hand, lifted him up, and told him: “Man, don’t you fear God? That body is holy! How could you bury that stinking and decaying corpse with the body of Paraskeve, the servant of God?” [And the queen told him:] “Go right away and tell everyone to deliver me from that unbearable stench! If you do not do that, know that the divine fire will burn you and all of you will perish. Because I am human too, and my native land is Epivat.”

That same night a woman by the name of Euthymia had the same vision. On the morning they told everyone about it. When they heard that, everyone took candles and gathered at the body of the saint. They

⁶⁶ The text has *stálpnik*, a holy man who lived on a column.

dug out the body and laid it in a casket. Then they carried it to the church of the Holy Apostles where it pours out healing to this very day: the possessed get healed, the blind see the light, the lame get to walk, and the people afflicted by all kinds of disease get whole again.

The great Tsar Ioan Asen, son of the great and old Tsar Asen,⁶⁷ heard about the miracles of the saint and strongly desired to transport the body of the saint to his land. Then the Franks ruled in Constantinople and paid tribute to Ioan Asen.⁶⁸ He, however, wanted neither silver nor precious stones, but set off with diligence and carried the saintly body to his glorious Tsarigrad Tarnov. There he met it together with the patriarch, the entire clergy, and the people, and with candles, incense-burners, and every honor they laid her in the royal church.⁶⁹

May through her prayers God welcome us in His Kingdom! Amen.

138 *Short (Prologue) account of the translatio of the relics of St Ilarion (Hilary) of Maglen.*

Very little is known about the life of St Ilarion (Hilary) of Maglen: we know neither his native place nor the monastery where he resided as a monk and then abbot. He was consecrated bishop of Maglen in southwestern Bulgaria between 1133 and 1142 by Archbishop Eusthathius of Ohrid and died c. 1164. If the information in his fourteenth-century *Life* by Patriarch Euthymius is correct, he was close to Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180). He was not canonized officially but was revered as a saint by the local Bulgarian population and the tradition was acknowledged by the Bulgarian Patriarchy in the fourteenth century. Euthymius' *Life* might have been the first official record about him; there are no sure traces of an earlier *Life* except the short account translated here. The account is known in two versions, one with unidentified origins, from the thirteenth century from which the current translation was made, and a more popular one included in the *Verse (Stishen) Prologue*. Edition: *BSM*, 419–20; Angelov, *Iz starata literatura*, I, 98–99.

Translatio of the relics of St Ilarion, bishop of Maglen. During his reign the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan, the brother of the old Tsar Asen, conquered the land of the Greeks, with Thrace, Macedonia, Nea Hellas,⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ioan Asen II (1218–1241).

⁶⁸ There is no independently verifiable information that the Latin Empire of Constantinople ever paid tribute to Ioan Asen II.

⁶⁹ The “patriarch” was the archbishop and Primas of Bulgaria, mostly likely Besarion.

⁷⁰ The text has “Neada.” According to Ivan Bozhilov, this is a calque of “Hellada” or Greece; Peter Koledarov argues that the term denoted only the region of central Greece.

and Hellas, and reached the city of Maglen, where he stayed for one hundred days. He prayed to God, and it was granted to him to find there the casket of the blessed Ilarion, soldier against the Bogomils. Burning with divine zeal he desired to transport the relics of the saint in his reigning capital city called the Great Tarnov. That was what he ordered to those subject to his power. They took the casket with the relics of the saint and carried it to that city.⁷¹ When the patriarch of the city of Tarnov⁷² and the entire Bulgarian land heard about the coming of the saint, he went out to meet him with the bishops and all the clergy, the *bolijars* and all the people, with candles, incense-burners, and aromatic oils. They brought him in and laid him in the God-strengthened and God-protected city of Tarnov, on the twenty-first day of the month of October.

After many years when a long time had passed, the new Tsar Ioan Asen [II], the son of the old Tsar Asen, received the scepter of the tsardom. He reigned and held power over the Bulgarians, the Greeks, and the Franks and even over the Serbians and the Albanians, and over all the cities from sea to sea. This Tsar Ioan Asen willed to build a church in the name of the holy Forty Martyrs and Victors in Virtue.⁷³ When the church was completed and beautified accordingly, they moved into it the casket with the body of the most blessed St Ilarion. He lies there and grants honest healings to those who come to him with faith. May God admit us in His Kingdom through his prayers!

Prologue Life of Michael the Soldier of Potuka.

139

Virtually nothing is known about this soldier-saint, a Bulgarian parallel to St George. Depending on the interpretation of criptic clues in the *Life* he might have lived either in the time of Prince Boris-Michael (852–889) or during the reign of Emperor Michael IV Paphlagon (1034–1041). The settlement of Potuka is unidentified and was located somewhere in the southern foothills of central Stara Planina. Michael was locally revered until the late twelfth century; with the *translatio* of his relics to Tarnov he became a nationally acknowledged saint. Beside the *Life*, a *Service* was composed for him for the needs of his cult. The *Life* was included in the *Verse (Stishen) Prologue* and was later widely disseminated in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Editions: *BSM*, 422–24; B. Angelov, “Starobalgarski textove. VII. Starobalgarskijat razkaz za Mihail Voin,” *Izvestija na Arhivnija Institut pri BAN*, 1 (1957), 297–300. Literature:

⁷¹ The *translatio* occurred in the summer of 1205 after Kaloyan’s victory over the Latin Empire at Adrianople.

⁷² I.e., Primas Basil.

⁷³ Ioan Asen II (1218–1241) renewed and enlarged the already existing church.

Klementina Ivanova, “Literaturni nabljudenija varhu dve pohvalni slova na Evtimij Tarnovski,” *Starobalgarska Literatura*, 14 (1983), 10–24.

On the same day [November 22] is the assumption of the holy and righteous Michael the Soldier. This saint of God [called] Michael [lived] in the years of the pious Tsar Michael.⁷⁴ [He was] Bulgarian by birth and did not come from the lower classes but stemmed from a most respectable and faithful lineage, foremost among the noble Christians in the town of Potuka. His parents and many others called him a holy child. Since his youth, still a youngster, he lived a pure life. He always had fear of God on his mind, fasted and gave alms, stretched his hand to the poor, visited the sick, was quiet and meek, and was adorned with all kinds of virtue. When he reached his twenty-fifth year, in accordance with the military custom, they chose him to be *primikure* over free soldiers.⁷⁵

It happened that Ethiopians and Agarenes rose against the city of Rome and the people of the Christian country and tsardom.⁷⁶ A great multitude of Roman people set off [against them]. The Agarenes took the field as well because the Agarene people are numerous. The Romans, seeing that the Agarenes and the Ethiopians are taking the upper hand, promptly fled to the mountains and deserted places. St Michael was not scared and kept encouraging his people. However, when he saw that all of the Roman people had fled, he fell on the ground in tears and prayed to God on behalf of the Christians, saying this: “Lord, Christ, God Almighty . . .,” etc. When he finished his prayer, he hurled himself upon the foreigners with his soldiers. He penetrated into the midst of the huge multitude of Agarenes and Ethiopians, vanquished them and dispersed them, and neither he nor any of his soldiers suffered any harm.

When he came back from that war, he took the road home. When he reached to the place called Tiraisa he decided to have a rest there. There was a large lake in that place. A dragon used to come out of the

⁷⁴ Most scholars agree that this was either Prince Boris-Michael (852–889, 893) or the Emperor Michael IV Paphlagon (1034–1041); the latter option would locate the events in the first half of the eleventh century.

⁷⁵ The leader of a unit of soldier-landholders or *stratiotae*.

⁷⁶ The Ethiopians are Arabs from Africa; Agarene is a generic term for a Muslim but here refers to Near and Middle Eastern Arabs. Depending on whether the events are dated to the ninth or to the eleventh century, the text either refers to the Arab attacks on Constantinople and Thessaloniki or to Arab incursions in southern Italy, in which case Michael might have been a Byzantine commander in Italy.

lake and eat people and beasts. His servant saw smoke on the lake. He snatched their food and quickly went to the spot where the smoke came from. There he found a maiden sitting on the ground. He questioned her and she told him about the dragon. While he was looking at her and listening to her account his master's food burned. [Nonetheless] he took the food to the servant of God Michael. Michael asked him: "Why are you late and why is the food burned?" He told him everything that he had heard from the maiden. When the servant of God Michael heard this, he ordered his servants to come with him, but they did not want to. The blessed prayed, made the sign of the holy cross upon his face, got on his horse, and took his best servant along. When they reached the lake where the maiden was he questioned her about everything and [said]: "How did you turn up here?" She wanted him to go away, threatening him that the beast will eat him up. Then she told him that there was a custom in that town to feed the dragon with their children.

Michael ordered his servant to get on his horse and go away and fell on the ground himself to pray to God. As he was getting up after the prayer, behold, with a hissing sound the dragon surfaced in the middle of the lake. Its neck towered twenty *sazhens* over the lake, his tail beat the waters at forty elbows length, and his three mouths were wide open.⁷⁷ The saint took his sword and shield and cut off the wicked [creature's] three monstrous heads. The dragon coiled its tail, hit him on the right cheek and the left arm, and wounded him. He fainted, but soon revived. His servant, having seen the miracle, ran to the town to announce it. The citizens went out of town with candles and incense-burners to meet the saint and praised God. He handed the maiden back to her parents.

The saint continued on his way and reached his home. [There] he lived a few days and yielded up his blessed soul to God whom he loved since his youth, and moved over to the heavenly Kingdom, working many omens and miracles and granting the gift of healing to those who came to him with faith.

When the great Tsar Kaloyan held power he conquered Potuka and transported St Michael. When Patriarch Basil heard this, he went out, together with all the clergy and the *bolijars*, with candles and

⁷⁷ One *sagen* would be about 2 meters (6 feet).

incense-burners, to meet the saint.⁷⁸ Tsar Kaloyan and the patriarch took the saint, brought him in the God-saved city of Tsarigrad Tarnov and laid him in the great patriarchal church “Holy Ascension,” in a new casket. May God grant us entry into His Kingdom through his prayers! Amen.

140 *Short Life of St Cyril (Assumption of Cyril).*

The *Life* was composed for the needs of St Cyril’s liturgical service and is largely a redaction of the Slavic apostle’s *Long Life*. It incorporates elements of the Bulgarian popular tradition about the saint and draws, perhaps, on other written sources, such as the *Life of Clement* and the *Legend of Thessaloniki*. Such dependence, as well as the reference to the Roman Church as heretical, the language of the text, the treatment of the Moravian and Khazar mission of St Cyril, and the expression “Bulgarian by birth,” indicate a rather late date for the *Life*. In spirit and purpose it is best attributed to the sustained and well-documented effort of the thirteenth-century Bulgarian literati to build a national canon of saints for the strengthening of their newly restored independent church and state. The *Life* was not incorporated in the standard *Prologues* and is extant in only seven copies. Edition: *BSM*, 283–88; Angelov, *Iz starata literatura*, I, 36–44.

The fatherland of our blessed father Cyril was the thrice-glorious and great city of Thessaloniki, where he was born. Bulgarian by birth, he was born of faithful and pious parents. His father’s name was Leo, his mother’s, Maria.⁷⁹ [They were] wealthy notables in that city, pious and harboring fear of God in their souls, steering clear of evil deeds. They gave birth to a son, whose name in the holy baptism was Constantine and gave him to a nurse to breast-feed him. However, he did want to suck from a stranger’s breast, but only from his mother’s. His mother breast-fed him and instructed him in piety and faithfulness. When he reached the appropriate age, they put him to study the books.

This child had a dream of a man, who stood in front of him and showed him maidens, telling him: “Constantine, pick the one you want.” He spotted a beautiful maiden adorned with pearls and precious stones by the name of Sophia, and he chose her for himself.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ As in most other text from the latter thirteenth century on Basil, archbishop since 1187 and Primas since 1204 is anachronistically given the title of patriarch.

⁷⁹ The name of Cyril’s mother is mentioned in the Prologue *Life* of Methodius as well, but as both *Lives* are late writings it is not certain whether the information is authentic.

⁸⁰ That is, he chose the divine wisdom or philosophy and theology.

This same Constantine lived from his youth pure as an angel, shunning and avoiding all carnal delights, constantly singing psalms and songs, [exercising] in spiritual obedience, and always following the straight road.

When the tsar's *logothete* heard about his virtues, he sent for him.⁸¹ He came to Constantinople and here he studied with the nephew of Tsar Michael.⁸² In three months he mastered grammar, geometry, and Homer with Leo and Photius.⁸³ He also learned the entire course of philosophy: rhetoric, arithmetic, astronomy, and music.

Then Patriarch John of Constantinople preached heresy and blasphemed against the holy icons.⁸⁴ The holy council deposed him from his throne. Constantine the Philosopher went there, vanquished him in a dispute, and exposed his impious heresy.

Then he went to Bregalnitsa and there he found that some of the Slavic nation had already been baptized. As for those who were not, he baptized them and guided them in the orthodox faith. He wrote books for them in the Slavic language. He guided into the Christian faith 54,000 of them.⁸⁵

There was a dispute among the Saracens about the Holy Trinity. The Saracens sent to Tsar Michael [for help in the dispute] about the Holy Trinity and the Orthodox faith. The tsar immediately sent there the Philosopher. He went there and exposed the impious heresy of Muhammad. Shamed by the Philosopher, they gave him to drink a magical potion laced with poison but by God's grace their magic did not do him any harm.⁸⁶

⁸¹ The *logothete* Theoktistos was regent and the most powerful official during Michael III's minority. He was also related to the *strategos* Leo and patron of his children, including Constantine and Methodius.

⁸² The *Long Life* of Cyril, composed in Moravia upon his death, relates that Cyril studied with Emperor Michael III. It is not clear whether the emperor had a nephew.

⁸³ Leo the Mathematician lived in the first three quarters of the ninth century and was a professor in the court school Magnaura. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople (858–867 and 877–886), was one of the most learned men of his time and chief protagonist in the so-called Photian schism between the Greek and the Latin churches. He too, taught in the Magnaura.

⁸⁴ The text relates to the second wave of iconoclasm before the cult of icons was restored at the council of 843. Patriarch John the Grammarian (837–842) was one of the last prominent opponents of the cult.

⁸⁵ Bregalnitsa is the area around the river with the same name, a tributary of the river Vardar. In that time it was in the confines of the Bulgarian state.

⁸⁶ The mission to the Arabs, which was an official diplomatic enterprise led by Methodius, was most likely in 851 or 852.

Then the prince-khagan of the Khazar land sent envoys to Tsar Michael, seeking a man who would teach them the Orthodox Christian faith. Because they were not yet Christian, Saracens and Jews were pushing them to join their impious faiths. Tsar Michael sent Constantine the Philosopher and his brother Methodius.⁸⁷ When they arrived in Khersones [Constantine] learned the Hebrew speech and their books, and translated the grammar in eight parts. Here he found a Samaritan and Samaritan books.⁸⁸ He prayed to God, got enlightened, and began to read those books, and baptized the Samaritan and his son.

Here he heard that St Clement was still buried under the sea.⁸⁹ He prayed and persuaded the archbishop of Khersones and all of his clergy to board a ship. When they reached the place the sea became completely calm and they began to sing and dig. Immediately, a sweet odor arose, as if from a multitude of incense-burners, and the holy relics appeared. They took them and carried them into the city with honor and praises.

The Philosopher left the city and continued on his way. All of a sudden, he was attacked by fighters, that is, Hungarian warriors.⁹⁰ The Philosopher met them with prayer and mollified them. They alighted from their horses, bowed down to him, and sent him on his way with honor.

He boarded a ship and set sail for the Khazar land. [They] came to a certain lake⁹¹ at the mountains of the Caucasus where the Khazar prince-khagan resided. Many Saracens and Jews gathered here and argued many times with the Philosopher. But the Philosopher, together with his brother Methodius, exposed their impious heresies and overcame them. When the khagan saw that the Philosopher brought to light their heresy, he cried out loud: "Here, I see how the Philosopher with God's help cast Jewish pride on the ground and hurled Saracen daring onto the other side of the river!" Constantine the Philosopher

⁸⁷ The mission to Khazaria took place in 861.

⁸⁸ Most likely the Pentautech, written in Samaritanian alphabet.

⁸⁹ St Clement was an early martyr highly revered in the city of Rome for he was confused with Pope Clement (+ 97), the third bishop of Rome after St Peter. His relics were deposited in a church in Khersones, which was partially flooded by the Black Sea.

⁹⁰ The author of the *Life* misinterpreted his source, the *Long Life* of Cyril, where the text relates that the Magyars "howled like wolves," and rendered "howling" as "soldiers." In Old Slavic the terms are close.

⁹¹ The Sea of Azov, called the Lake of Meotida in medieval sources.

taught the Orthodox faith to all the people and the khagan and baptized him and two hundred notables and many others.⁹² The khagan gave him many presents; however, he did not take them but asked for many people among the captured Christians instead.

When he left that place he went through a desert where they found only salty water. He offered a prayer and the water became sweet. He and those with him drank from it. This is how they reached Kherson. Here he foretold the city's archbishop that he would leave this world and present himself [to God] and so it happened.

Then he came to the people of Phul.⁹³ There he found an enormous oak intertwined with a cherry tree to which they offered sacrifices and called it Alexander. The Philosopher strengthened these people in the Orthodox faith and the oak he dug out and cut off.

Then he returned to Constantinople. Here he found messengers sent to the tsar by Rostislav, the prince of Great Moravia, who asked for teachers in the Orthodox faith.⁹⁴ The tsar promptly sent them the Philosopher and his brother. When they arrived in Great Moravia Rostislav welcomed them. Here he translated the scriptures from the Greek into the Slavic language and baptized them.⁹⁵ He acquainted them with the Christian faith and taught them the Slavic books.

After that he went to Panonia. Here he was welcomed by Kotsel, the Lesh prince.⁹⁶ He took on fifty disciples and taught them the Orthodox faith and the Slavic books. Here he found many heretics and exposed them and put their heresy to shame. The Philosopher requested from the prince two hundred Christian prisoners and set them free.

When the archbishop of Rome⁹⁷ heard about the Philosopher he sent to him and called him to Rome. The Philosopher came to Rome, carrying the relics of St Clement with him. When Pope Hadrian of

⁹² The *Long Life* of Cyril only mentions the number of baptized Khazars without specifying their status. The khagan did not convert.

⁹³ Most likely a major settlement on the Khersones.

⁹⁴ The prince of Great Moravia (modern Czech Republic and Slovakia) Rostislav (846–870) invited the Byzantine mission to strengthen his position vis-à-vis the Frankish empire and its ecclesiastical arm, the bishopric of Pasau, which was the metropolitan see for his land.

⁹⁵ Cyril and Methodius did not baptize the Moravians; the author seeks to glorify his hero.

⁹⁶ Kotsel (861–874) was the ruler of a short-lived Slavic principality in modern western Hungary.

⁹⁷ Popes of Rome at the time of the Moravian mission were Nicholas I (858–867) and Hadrian II (867–872).

Rome learned about the body of St Clement and the arrival of the Philosopher he and his clergy went out to meet him with honor, with candles and sweet smelling and perfumed incense-burners. The pope kissed the body of St Clement and they brought it in the city of Rome. The Philosopher was received by the pope with great honor and great love. On the pope's request, the Philosopher's Panonian and Moravian disciples who followed him were consecrated by the two bishops Formosa and Condrach.⁹⁸ Certain Jews and heretical bishops came to dispute with the Philosopher. He exposed their iniquitous heresy and shamed them. Many of the people of Rome came to him; he instructed them into the Orthodox faith and they memorized his teachings.⁹⁹

Then he took on the monastic image and was named Cyril. He lived in the monastic image for fifty days. When he felt that he was about to present himself [to God] he called his disciple who was bishop in Likia,¹⁰⁰ as well as Sava, Angelarius, Gorazd, and Naum, and instructed and edified them in the Orthodox faith. This is how he yielded up his soul in the hands of the living God whom he loved since his youth. May with his prayers the Lord God strengthen all of the tsardoms of the Orthodox Christians for all ages and grant us His Kingdom for eternity.¹⁰¹

Constantine called Cyril passed away [when he was] forty two years old,¹⁰² on the fourteenth day of the month of February, second *indiction*, the year from the creation of the world 6377 [869]. His honorable body was laid to rest in the church of St Clement where the body of the saint lies as well. To this day his holy casket grants cures to those who come with love and faith. Amen!

⁹⁸ Bishop Formoza of Porto, the future pope, was the Papacy's lead man in its eastern expansion. In 866 he was sent to Bulgaria and was twice requested by Prince Boris as head of the Bulgarian Church. Bishop Gauderic of Veletri (867–880) was one of Hadrian II's close advisors.

⁹⁹ The depiction of the Latin Church as heretical is clearly the product of a time post-dating the eleventh-century Great Schism between Latin Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy.

¹⁰⁰ The reference here is most likely to Clement, the future bishop of Velika; the author mangled the name of his diocese.

¹⁰¹ The oldest manuscript of the *Life* reads "may God strengthen the Bulgarian tsardom."

¹⁰² Most likely scribal error; the correct number is 42 years.

Short (Prologue) Life of Patriarch Joachim.

The *Life* of Joachim presents us with a figure well into the tradition of St John of Rila's "holy man" but one harnessed for the needs of the official church and state, another venerable tradition in Eastern Orthodoxy long followed in Byzantium. Joachim was the only head of the Bulgarian church canonized in the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, the only copy of his *Life* is damaged and lacks at least one folio. The *Life* sums up almost everything known about him and his career: monk in Mount Athos since his youth, hermit in northern Bulgaria, abbot of a monastery around 1227, and spiritual advisor to Ioan Asen II before 1234. His virtuous life and impeccable Orthodox credentials made him a suitable figure to take the reins of the Bulgarian church after the restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchy in 1235 in the place of Basil, who remained faithful to the union with Rome. Despite murky evidence in the *Life* that there were frictions between tsar and patriarch, both forceful personalities, Joachim outlived Ioan Asen II (1218–1241) and ended his service and life on January 18, 1246. Edition: Ivan Snegarov, "Neizdadeni balgarski zhitiija," *Godishnik na darzhavnija archiv*, 3 (1954), 166–8.

On this day [January 18] the *Life* of our blessed father Joachim, patriarch of Bulgaria.

This blessed father, our Joachim, was Bulgarian by birth, born of faithful parents. He grew up to hate the seductions of this world. He, therefore, left the world and went to the Holy Mountain [of Athos]. Here he adopted the great angelic image and was most obedient to all fathers. He spent his life in a pure fashion, in constant prayers, vigils, and contrition, having neither sleep nor rest, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting. He never reneged on his complete obedience to the abbot and all the brethren. Whenever the abbot or the brethren sent him to any kind of *diaconia* he never grumbled, but performed all *diaconies* for the monastery. He was always in tears, full of humility, compunction, and abstinence, tormenting his body all the time. This is how he performed the obligations of monasticism, and became famous among the fathers. He saw many holy fathers in the mountain [of Mount Athos] and following the example of their lives and virtuous strivings, he accomplished even more. Having spent here many years, he departed for the Danube and carved out a cave [in the rocks] above Krasen, making it his and his three disciple's residence.¹⁰³ Their names are Diomid, Athanasius,

¹⁰³ This is the reading of the text, "nad Krasnom." The place is either the medieval settlement and fortress of Tcherven or, more likely, the village of Krasen north of the river Rusenski Lom. About 5 km (3 miles) north of the village is situated the rock monastery complex of Ivanovo, where a large thirteenth-century church has been cleared, dedicated to Archangel Michael.

and Theodosius. Also, he carved out a small church dedicated to the Holy Transfiguration. Here he accomplished many good deeds, many more than his previous ones.

In the beginning of his reign, the Christ-loving Tsar Asen, son of the old Tsar Asen,¹⁰⁴ having heard about him and his virtues and accomplishments, went to meet him and gave him much gold. The elder hired workers with the gold, and they carved out a cave and built a great monastery in the name of the holy *archstrategos* Michael, which stands to this very day. Here he gathered a great multitude of monks and like a working bee he did not rest, but instructed them in the duties of monasticism, that is, set them on the road to salvation.

In that time Patriarch Basil ended his life.¹⁰⁵ The high priests of the entire Bulgarian land came together at a council, seeking to find someone fitting the rank of highest priest and found... [folio missing]. With great joy the tsar returned to his reigning city of Tarnov. All the high priests of the West installed the patriarch on the see of the great patriarchy of Tsarigrad Tarnov. The blessed Patriarch Joachim, sitting on the patriarchy's throne, blessed and enlightened the entire Bulgarian land. Gathering in his mind all the knowledge and all provisions, he arranged well the regulations of the secular and the regular clergy. As a good pilot, he held both helms and with his instruction directed straight the ship of this world. He took care of orphans and gave to the poor what was necessary. Those thrown in prison he advised; prayed constantly every hour; delived many who had been sentenced to death and saved many who found refuge with him from the tsar's wrath. He grazed well the flock given to him by God.

And so, holding the two helms of life in this world he departed to consolation and did everything well and brought to salvation those who listened to him and followed him. Having [fore]seen his end, he blessed the flock entrusted to him; he tended to them well and taught them to hold on to the righteous faith. Then he called his disciples and the entire ecclesiastical estate, blessed and instructed them well, and ended his life by yielding up his soul in God's hands, whose beloved he had become even while among the living. This blessed Patriarch Joachim lived as high priest nineteen years and presented himself [to God] in

¹⁰⁴ Ioan Asen II (1218–1241), the son of Asen I (1187–1197).

¹⁰⁵ The patriarch did not die until around 1233 but abdicated the patriarchal throne, remaining loyal to the union with Rome.

the year 6754 [1246], fourth *indiction*, month of January, eighteenth day. With his prayers God will strengthen the Bulgarian tsardom for all ages and will associate him with His Tsardom.

Life of Theodosius of Tarnov, *middle of the fourteenth century*.

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The *Life* was written to commemorate the deeds of the most prominent Bulgarian follower of hesychasm, a mystical teaching that spread among late medieval Orthodox spiritualists in Byzantium and the Balkans. It illustrates the central tenets of hesychasm, as well as the deep involvement of leading hesychasts of later generations in the affairs of church and state. The *Life* was written in Greek by Theodosius' disciple Kallistos, Patriarch of Constantinople, in the middle of the fourteenth century. The translation here is after the fifteenth-century Bulgarian version of Vladislav the Grammarian. Edition: Vasil Zlatarski, "Zhitie i zhizn prepodobnago ottsa nashego Teodosija izhe v Tarnovo postnichevstvavshego," *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenja, nauka, i knižnina*, 20 (1904): 2, 1–41.

Month of November, day 27. *Life* and deeds of our blessed father Theodosius, who was a hermit in Tarnov and a disciple of the blessed Gregory the Sinaite, Composed by the most holy patriarch of the city of Constantine, Lord Kallistos.

How does virtue raise, a thing great and most divine! As a gift from God, it legitimates virginity and loves celibacy. Simply put, it is the cause of everythig good for humanity and makes those who live their lives well equal, so to speak, to the angels themselves. No one can describe or portray its highness and greatness. When you hear the voice of the divine scripture, "Your virtue, Christ, has covered the heavens," the height of virtue appears unreachable to you. For if the one-natured divine Word of God merged with flesh and His virtue covered the heavens, in what ways would it be possible to express and exhibit its greatness and goodness? Because the virtue of the Word surpassed not only the angels, the lowest of the [heavenly] ranks, but all of the heavenly powers which stand closest to God. If we begin to master it and became zealous in it with meek zeal and eventually join with it, we will be gods and will become perfect men,¹⁰⁶ as the divine Paul says, for it is close to God and covers the heavens. As it was mentioned, we too emulate God in grace according to the divine Paul: "Be like me, as I am like Christ."¹⁰⁷ For God, the Creator and Lord of

¹⁰⁶ After Ephesians 4:13–14.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:1 "Follow my example as I follow Christ's".

everything, generously grants everything to His servants, including that we will be close to God and will be gods ourselves, according to the divine David. Therefore, when the glory that triumphs in heaven and is indeed heavenly settles in a pure and immaculate soul it performs great and marvelous deeds. It prepares the prophets to announce the future of everyone, perfects the priests, and instructs the illiterate in supreme wisdom. It made this divine Theodosius, whom we are about to praise, the paragon of virtue, divine vessel of every good work, [taught him] to cleanse and build wisely, reward the souls of men, and guide them to the spiritual gardens of virtue where there are sweet drinks and even sweeter and clearer waters; to attract with his words those accustomed to lush spiritual meadows; and to spur them in active virtue and elevate them in the words of the divine spirit through the meek Providence residing in him. [Of this] word will be below, in the description of his extraordinary life and deeds [lived] according to the divine law to which he surrendered himself from a tender age, as those who know about those things testify. This man of God was like a young bird which, as soon as it is covered with feathers, flies out of the nest with joy and soars over the entire universe. [He], on account of his wise actions and strict abstinence in a very short time became like the candle in the fable. Thus, leaving behind openly the worldly nest and the secular food, he preferred the hermitage. He thought constantly of the heavenly powers and joined them, as someone would say practicing deeds of the mind [lit.: *theoria*].

It is not easy to determine now from what nation and from what transient place of birth this divine man hailed for he had taken care for this to remain secret.¹⁰⁸ He avoided conversing with his relatives because he was adamant in the desire to preserve solely for God the longings of his heart. It appeared to him that it was better to sadden his parents or any other person, whoever that might be, rather than diminish the love of God he knew. And not only that [he kept secret]. However, I will make it known that the birth place of this man was the heavenly, free, and safe Jerusalem and his brothers and relatives were the heavenly soldiers. If someone wants to know about his sublunar and earthly fatherland, let him hear: it is Eden and Paradise, for which [man] was created and destined, to reside there in the image and likeness of God. For that reason, he strove to subject the body to the spirit

¹⁰⁸ Theodosius hailed from northwestern Bulgaria.

and always struggled to overcome carnal desires so that he can regain what has been lost, I mean the primordial image and nature [or man], and thus acquire the divinity lost at the time of the Fall. What exactly did the most diligent self-fashioner do and in what did he transform himself we will tell and explain in due course.

When he heard the holy and divine voice of the Savior saying this: “Whoever wants to walk in my steps, let him deny himself, take his cross, and follow me,” when he heard this, he left his native place, disappearing from it like a word that dissolves in the air, and went to a town called in the local tongue Bdin. There he found the famous monastery of the most divine and holy hierarch Nicolas, called Archar. He approached the abbot, whose name was Job, a man of virtue in word and deed who, having perceived with the help of his soul’s eye that he will be a chosen vessel of God, welcomed him gladly and dressed him in the monastic image, forbidding him to think about anything that is transient and of the flesh.

Having acquainted himself with monastic life he was now ready for any task. Because of that [the abbot] made him a supervisor of the brethren, commanding him to do everything that was needed in the monastery. Showing no sign of bodily weariness the true performer of the divine commandments put up with everything with dignity, as if he was serving not men but God. He distinguished himself so much in obedience and humility that it is not easy to recall another, whoever that might be, who has been as zealous as him. He borrowed that way [of life] from John of the Ladder, that is, the abbot of the most holy Mount Sinai. He carried on like this, pleasing God, [passing from] obedience to humility and from humility to indifference, which is also called the Lady of all virtue, and never missed fasting and abstinence but held to them strongly, vigorously, and marvelously. Living diligently in such virtues, as in water springs, he learned, artfully and masterfully, the songs of David as well.

He resided there for a long time and learned in detail the life of the fasting monks. He even sent to God his father [Abbot Job], having fortified himself with his prayers like armor. Not feeling fulfilled with [the abbot’s] instructions and assistance and being like a working bee that visits diverse flowers and collects the sweetest honey, the wisest one was not satisfied with being instructed once or twice, but diligently strove to achieve the perfect life in virtue.

For that reason he left the said monastery and went to Tarnov, the reigning city of the Bulgarians, second after Constantinople in word

and deed. Having found there the most famous monastery of the most glorious Virgin and Mother of God, the Mother of Christ, he settled in it. Even to this day it is customary called the Holy Mount.¹⁰⁹ Theodosius was sweetly welcomed by those residing there, but he did tarry long in that place. Like an astute and shrewd merchant who hopes to derive greater profit and thinking that he would be able to find something more distinguished, he set off intending, as the divine voice has it in the Gospel, to discover the most precious pearl, and arrived in a place called Tcherven.¹¹⁰ Having found a monastery there, he strongly insisted that its abbot, who was placed higher not only in virtue but in piety and the firmness of the faith as well instructed him spiritually. The divine man, who possessed everything, diligently put himself to work so that another one among men becomes capable of understanding the divine commandments and gets used to them. Again, like someone who knows full well how to pick the ripest grapes and wants to gather all of them Theodosius, having collected from his fellow-fasters all that leads to virtue, promptly left the place and went to the mountain of Sliven; for back then there were not many in the country of Bulgaria who lived in virtue. Having discovered there the monastery of the most pure Lady, our Mother of God, called Epikerni's, because this divine temple was founded by him¹¹¹ he entered it and demonstrated to the abbot the sweetness of his service and other monastic accomplishments.

Having spent a long time in that place, suddenly a rumor reached his ears. I mean, the rumor said that a certain man, called "The Sinaite" (for he took the nickname from Mount Sinai), with the monastic name of Gregory has arrived at a place located at the border between Greeks and Bulgarians and called Parorie.¹¹² It was far from the world, from the people's dwellings and problems, and was cut off from worldly affairs because it was deep in the wilderness. There he built a couple of monastic cells and settled, fully dedicating himself to God and receiving ample illumination from Him. Before he arrived, the place was completely deserted. He was the first one to settle there and lay the foundation of virtue. By the way, this great and heavenly man

¹⁰⁹ Sveta Gora, one of Tarnov's hills opposite of Tsarevets, the fortified town.

¹¹⁰ About 70 km (50 miles) north of the Bulgarian capital Tarnov.

¹¹¹ I.e. by an official with the title of *epikerni* or cup-bearer.

¹¹² Gregory the Sinaite (late thirteenth century–1346), the leading hesychast figure in the first half of the fourteenth century. In the late 1320s he settled in Parorie, a region in Strandzha, a mountain range in southeastern Bulgaria at the boundary with Turkey.

and earthly angel spent not a few years in our Holy Mount of Athos and instructed many well and righteously in the deed and vision [of hesychasm] for he had really perfected himself through virtuous silence and not only on account of his external virtues but by his internal qualities he made that forest most divine, and himself equal to angels. However, when the nation of the Agareni¹¹³ surrounded the entire Greek land and devastated every place and country, he left that divine mountain. Being unable to stay there because of the frequent barbarian invasions he moved to the above mentioned place. In a very short time the rumor about that marvelous [man] spread all over the country and [his] dwelling place became known to everyone. One could see great multitudes gathering there to listen to the divine preaching of the man as if a source of sweet water flowed from there.

As the delightful rumor made the rounds, it caught the godly persons. Among others, that marvelous Theodosius got caught by it as well. And like the magnet attracts iron to itself so the rumor of the father [attracted] that divine [man]. And so, diligently setting off for that desert he sought out what he desired most and having found the divine man he was filled with great spiritual joy and indescribable delight. Immediately, having caught sight of him, the divine man looked sweetly at him and welcomed him because, I think, the grace that resided in Theodosius became clear to him. Since then, therefore, day and night he was instructed by him, on the edifying orations, in the pure and undefiled faith, in the divine and other commandments that liken man to God and exalt him to the level of the divine Spirit. And thus he walked in the steps of his teacher, sating himself with spiritual drink like a calf sucking from its mother and always receiving the mother's milk. In the same manner he was given milk by that divine soul, and it did not cease to do it. Having seen his divine zeal for the divine life, the great one did not omit anything, instructing him well and most artfully. He clearly acquainted him not solely with the introductory and simple [monastic] life, but with the deed and vision¹¹⁴ as well, when the demons attack from left and right.

When that place called Paroria became full with robbers and killers what did the lover of the desert life devise and what did he wish

¹¹³ The author is referring to early Turkish depredations of Byzantium during the civil wars of the 1320s.

¹¹⁴ The two steps of perfection in hesychasm, *praxis* and *theoria*, which lead to a state in which one can absorb the divine energy and come to know God.

for and accomplish? Disturbed by the inhuman attacks and the daily devastations of the killers who did not leave the marvelous fathers who lived the monastic life practice silence in peace, he sent the amazing Theodosius or, to put it better, the gift of God, to Tsar Alexander,¹¹⁵ who then held the Bulgarian scepter and was a man pious, Orthodox, and pleasing God like no other among the tsars, to inform him about everything so that he took mercy and built a fortification as a haven for the relief and respite of the marvelous one and those with him. Having heard from Theodosius about these things the tsar, who held in high esteem piety and virtue and was full of wisdom like no one else, who knew him better than the others since earlier time, and who loved the obedient monks and rejoiced for them as much as it was possible, readily answered his plea after sweetly listening to the words of the divine man. With a glad heart and a generous hand he promptly sent money, beasts, and other things necessary to fortify the tower; this is how the brethren acquired the property.

The divine Theodosius, for his part, most diligently performed all the work needed, serving incessantly and even in the middle of the night rose up to pray to God, as the divine David says. And so, when the tower and the church were completed, there was eternal stillness and silence and protection from the depredations of the robbers. Observing the amazing Theodosius' gradual progression in virtue and spiritual perfection the divine man, the great father and silence-lover ordered him to practice silence in his cell all by himself so that he suffered the temptation of the demons as it always happens to those who perform great deeds and always strive to reach God. And so, armed with the prayers of the father as if with body armor, helmet, and the strongest weaponry, he did what was ordered most eagerly. He went through many battles and opposition from all sides but was not satisfied with this at all, for he felt no fear either by hearing their [the demons'] voices or by the constant weird visions, for none of them was able even for a moment to divert him from focusing on God. Moreover, he prayed in himself: "Joy of mine, deliver me of those who lay siege to me!" and again "My Lord guards me and will not deprive me from anything." Recalling these and similar prayers and constantly instructing himself he [forced] the visions to speedily disappear without a trace.

¹¹⁵ Ioan Alexander (1331–1371).

When it became necessary—for the brothers were again harassed from everywhere—the valiant Theodosius was sent by the father to the above mentioned tsar a second time because no one else could have done this job, given that they were acquaintances of old and the tsar harbored a pure and sincere love for him. He willingly accepted the request of the father and set off to fulfill it. He went to the tsar, obtained everything that was necessary, and made ready to depart.

[However], there was there a man [born of] prominent and famous parents who for a long time had a great love and dedication for the venerable [Theodosius]. Fully committed to the longing of his heart, he adopted the monastic image. He was very simple, for there was no one to instruct him in the way of God and he was greatly distressed and much saddened. For that reason, when he learned about Theodosius' arrival he promptly approached him, kissed the feet of the blessed one many times and reminded him about the love that has been between them of old and of his intention to stab himself to death or throw himself off a high place if he got turned down. "Just like the deer longs for water springs," he said, "so does my soul long for the prayer of the father and to reside with [him] together with you." And so, honoring his pleas, he took him with himself and brought him to the blessed father. His name was Roman. Heeding the commandment that no one who comes should be driven away, the old man not only did not drive him away, but eagerly admitted him among the brothers. He lived there a good many years, serving with meek obedience and doing what he was told. Once for a certain reason he was sent by the father on some errand. In the meantime the great old man lived in all kinds of virtuous deeds and strove for the heavenly kingdom and the monastic property grew and there was hope it would grow even more. However, the end of human nature arrived even for this most blessed father and mentor of the monastic community, for he was a man too, and when the time came for his departure to God, they buried him with many tears and wailings. Having found themselves without shepherd, the monks called on Theodosius to be their abbot for he emulated the life of the father, and decided that he would be the reason for their continuing in the coenobitic life. But he did not obey them in the least, nor did he wish to take on himself the leadership. Shortly after the death of the divine father he left the place and went back to the mountain of Sliven, in part to visit the brethren who resided there, in part because of the above mentioned Roman.

The said Roman, having been sent out earlier by the father for the reasons we mentioned, did not get to enjoy the burial of the father. Because of that he grieved much and was very sad. Theodosius found him there [in that state]. The two of them spent a short while there and then set off for the holy Mount Athos, the monastic metropoly, the cause of all virtue and the purgatory of all sinful desires. They had wanted to go there for a long time and were enthusiastic to see the divine men who lived there the monastic life and accomplished different heroic deeds; now they fulfilled their wish. Like a working bee he [Theodosius] diligently gathered all orations [that pertained] to the deed and vision [of hesychasm] and his spiritual purity attracted the Spirit to him. However, being unable to settle there on account of the barbarian invasions, he turned Roman back, and set out for Thessaloniki himself. Having visited the virtuous men who resided there and having savored their blessings he willed to go to Ber [Verroia] to get his fill of the images and discussions with the local fathers. There he found the hermitage called the New Anthony, where many fasting monks [hermits] competed with each other in virtue and lived the lives of true angels. Having enjoyed their prayers and thoughts, he boarded a ship for Constantinople, where he stayed but a short while. Having bowed with great reverence, as some would say, to all those whom, on account of their honorable and divine sufferings, the Creator and Lord of everything made the consolation of human miseries and worthy of marveling and fame, and having kissed them from the bottom of his heart, we went back to the foundation in Paroria, first, because he wanted to visit his brethren and disciples and second, because he wanted to bow before the tomb of the great and divine father. After that he returned again to Sliven. Having found there Roman, his soul-mate and look-alike in character, as it was said above, he set off with him to the mountain of Emona, which lies by the Black Sea coast, close to Mesembria [Nesebar] where the two of them did not cease to pray to God for as long as they stayed there. They added labor to the labor and fast to the fast and perfected themselves spiritually, forgetting what was behind them and looking forward to what lay ahead, to use the words of the divine Paul. They walked the divine road like harmonious spouses. However, since even there the hater of good did not leave them in peace but sent killers and blood-thirsty men to that place of silence, they were at a loss about what to do. In terms of character they were like bees. For bees, when they cannot find a place close to their dwelling to collect honey and fill their sectogram-like houses with

nectar, go to a place where they can stuff their hives with sweet nectar from which they obtain pure honey. They did the same. They carefully sought out a safe place which no bandit could approach; besides, it had to be under the tsar's protection so that the fear [of the tsar] impregnated it against the slanders of evil men. They decided that it would be good to settle in a place like that and there collect the honey of virtues. They left that place [of Emona] and went to the tsar to inform him about everything.

The pious Tsar Alexander fully satisfied their plea, be it because of the long-standing and great love he had for Theodosius, be it because he wanted to enjoy [their] instruction more often. And so, when they went there and saw that the place was what they wished for, they were filled with undescribable joy. That mountain, called Kefalarevo is a long distance from the reigning city of Tarnov.¹¹⁶ They build their cells there and lived the immaterial life. Their cells were as worthy as that of Jacob. One can boldly say and think about them, if permissible, along the lines of Isaiah: "Like your good houses, Jacob, and like your tents, Israel, like the trees along the rivers and like the cedar trees which God planted."¹¹⁷ One can say even more about the fasting travails and all-night vigils. Three years passed in such labors. [Once], as Theodosius was having a vision, it seemed to him that the entire mountain was filled with diverse flowers and various marvelous trees loaded with an assortment of fruits, and a bright man commanded him to carefully pick the fruit. Having come to, he realized with his spiritual mind that the desert will be filled with monks who will bear the many assorted fruits of virtue. Not a long time afterwards this came to pass for, as more than fifty monks congregated there from different places, they turned the desert into a city. Like sweet-singing swallows they built their nests in places and sent to God their praises day and night. It will suffice to single out only one of them to serve as an example of the life and fasts [ascetic deeds] of all of them.

There was a man there, marvelous in his deeds and life. His name was Dionisius. He had the rank of a priest but because of his humble character he ceased to serve at the holy altar. Like no one else he owned nothing, for he emulated in everything the prophet Elijah or, to put

¹¹⁶ The place has not been identified. Most likely it was in the vicinity of the modern village of Kilifarevo, about 17 km (11 miles) north of Veliko Tarnovo, where archeologists have located a large monastic complex from the period.

¹¹⁷ Free rendering of Numbers 24:5–6.

it better, the Precursor and Baptist. He exhausted his body through hunger and thirst and emaciated it to such an extent through all-night vigils and frequent bows that only a sad shadow of his face could be recognized. His body dried up completely. He worked with his hands and did not eat bread without earning it. He went around dressed only in a skin, and a bad one at that. He was most proficient in the scripture. He knew the Divine Scripture by heart in both languages, Greek and Slavic. God had given him the gift of an artful and remarkable translator from the Hellenic and Slavic tongue. He translated many books and adorned the ecclesiastical establishment. He lived up to forty and more years and never went against the rules of monasticism. Waxed by a ravaging illness, he yielded up the spirit and went to God.

I would have liked to account for other hermits as well who lived back then, but to keep the story from becoming too long, what I said suffices for those who are wise and care about the soul. However, Theodosius, now the wisest of them all, was not satisfied with them, but like a magnet kept attracting from different places many others and the marvelous mountain was filled with a multitude of monks. Like bright stars in the heavenly firmament these virtuous fathers enlightened that marvelous hermitage, encouraged by the teaching and instruction of the wise father. They competed among themselves in a marvelous and amazing competition: each of them wanted to surpass the others in virtue. All that happened back them.

A monk called Theodorite came to Tarnov from Constantinople, allegedly to heal [the people]. However, as he got to work he began to plant the weeds of iniquity. The weeds were the blasphemies of the iniquitous Akindin and Barlaam.¹¹⁸ Not only that: he seduced the people with magic and charms. All this he did not only among the simple ones, but even more so among prominent and famous people. In the beginning, [he created] so much evil that the better part of town inclined toward the chasm. He taught them to worship an oak to receive remedy from it and because of that many sacrificed there sheep and lambs, believing in the deception.¹¹⁹ As this stirred up laud

¹¹⁸ Barlaam of Calabria and Akindin were the leaders of the rationalistic theological current opposing hesychasm. In the time of Theodosius life both had already been condemned by two councils in Constantinople and anathemized by the Byzantine and Bulgarian Church.

¹¹⁹ The author is either referring to a vestige of pagan custom or seeking to further malign Barlaam's and Akindin's doctrine, which had nothing to do with three worshipping.

dabates and controversies among the people it could not be hidden from the divine Theodosius. For that reason he set off eagerly, rooted out evil, strengthened the church's legacy, instructed the people to worship the One God in three Persons, put on the straight path those who had been deceived, and the deceiver and seducer himself drove out completely and covered him with eternal shame. After that he went back and settled in his beloved silence. Because of this the tsar developed an even stronger affection for the venerable and commitment and trust [in him] and ordered a tower to be build there as well as a church where he could dedicate himself forever to the service of God.

There was a nun in Thessaloniki called Irene. She used to do bad things. Residing in Thessaloniki, she pretended to lead an impeccable life but clandestinely and in secret created all kinds of iniquity and pollution. Having learned about her, many of the local monks often gathered in her place. And she, because she had learned in detail the entire most blasphemous heresy of the Mesalians,¹²⁰ preached it secretly to all those who came to her to perform defiling deeds. As the seduction spread about, many of the monks became ensnared by it. Dividing themselves into groups, they used to go to the holy Mount Athos and insulted much the monks there, [accusing them] that they were poor and beggars. And if they happened to be somewhere without bread or drink, they would cut down all the olive threes outside the monastery, many times [cutting down] vineyards and other threes as well; in all, they did everything that would appear to them harmful. This heresy spread about like that for three years if not longer. The holy fathers of that mountain, being able to put up neither with that impious heresy nor with their too many calumnies and shamelessness any longer, called up a council and revealed their lust and cunning. They drove them out in any way possible and gave them up to eternal damnation.

Two of them went to Tarnov. The one was called Lazarus and the other Cyril, nicknamed Bosota. Even though they only spent a short while here, they were not able to hide their heresy for long. Lazarus

¹²⁰ The teaching of the Mesalians is a fourth-century moderate dualist heresy which originated in Asia Minor and stressed the importance of personal effort for the salvation of the soul. In the early Middle Ages it spread to the Balkans and influenced Bogomilism. It was condemned numerous times. The reference is anachronistic but such attempts to identify new deviations from Orthodoxy with well known ancient heresies are a trope in the Orthodox discourse on the true faith.

went about like a madman.¹²¹ He used to go all over the city completely naked, covering his shameful parts with a pumpkin. It was a weird and an ugly spectacle for those who beheld it; the child-bearing member that God has given to people to propagate with he used to annoy with. For his part Cyril, the above-mentioned Bosota, gradually began to preach his iniquitous heresy. Sometimes he blasphemed against the holy icons, sometimes he trampled upon the holy icons and the honest and life-giving cross. Besides, he [kept] drinks and different kinds of impure food in his house. He taught that dreams were visions sent by God; that men and women should give up legitimate marriage; and many, many other blasphemies and slurs. He had a disciple, the priest Stephen, who was a malicious character much like him and was no less of a demoniac [man] and a guardian of this dirty heresy.¹²²

When all this spread out too much and their evil became obvious to every one, the patriarch who was the head of the church was at a loss about what to do, for he was a simple [man] and did not comprehend things well.¹²³ He called the divine Theodosius and informed him about everything. He requested that a council be convened to drive out evil. This was reported and carefully explained to the tsar. He ordered a council to be called up and attended it together with the patriarch, the entire ecclesiastical estate, and the council of the *bolijars*.¹²⁴ The blasphemous sowers of heresy appeared. The venerable Theodosius was entrusted with asking questions and countering them.

He asked them, saying: "What is this new doctrine of yours, disagreeing with the ecclesiastical tradition, which we hear you teaching and explicating?" They said to him in reply: "It is not a new invention, as you say, nor is it in disagreement with the ecclesiastical tradition. It is the words of the Lord as per the holy Gospel and the commands of the apostles. The Lord said: "Do not prepare food that gets spoiled but one that lasts in the eternal life,"¹²⁵ as well as: "Blessed are the poor in

¹²¹ To be a "madman in Christ" is the ultimate self-humiliation of men striving to attain holiness. Lazar practiced this form of extreme piety to attract attention to his teaching.

¹²² The teaching of Cyril and Stephen is clearly influenced by the Bogomils. The author seeks to discredit them by attributing to their doctrine orgiastic features.

¹²³ Kallistos is clearly biased and denigrates the figure of Patriarch Theodosius II (1348–1365) to exalt his hero.

¹²⁴ The council convened in the early 1350s, the exact date is unclear.

¹²⁵ John 6:27.

spirit.”¹²⁶ Living according to these commandments, we love poverty, pray incessantly, and do not rise against nature or something like that. We are the ones whom the Lord praised, the poor in spirit, and that is why we go all over the world, guarding the life-giving Word.” However, the most prudent one replied to this, saying: “The Lord said that not about earthly food, but about His divine commandments; and He ordered us to pray every hour and beg for our daily bread. It is the same according to the apostle: “My hands served me and those with me.”¹²⁷ We do not make the rounds to towns and villages drinking and eating our fill, calling ourselves priests and deacons, preaching shamelessly without having been ordained by a bishop and without being authorized to instruct. Who commanded you to advise people to forsake the lawful marriage, to forgo manual labor, and to cut off their child-bearing members? Who among the prophets or the apostles, and what book of the Gospels taught you to state that dreams as visions are from God? The sacred scripture instructs us that the one who believes in dreams is like the one who chases after his shadow, trying to catch it. It was the apostle who legitimized marriage. He says: “Honorable marriage and pure bed,” as well as: “God will judge the whores and the adulterer.”¹²⁸ The Lord, too, said: “What God put together man shall not rent asunder.”¹²⁹ When He went to the marriage in the Kana of Galilea, He blessed it and turned the water into wine. You are not poor in spirit, but dwelling places of impure spirits; they are your teachers and lords. What demon whispered to you to let loose your natural inclinations and argue that our nature is a slave to the demons? God did not create our nature to be slave to the demons, but made us free and masters of ourselves. The demons are enemies and opponents and they wage war against our nature. It all depends on our will: if we succumb to their advice it is evident we will be their subjects; if not, they will be shamed and we will be deemed worthy of the great crown. Because of that it is all up to our will: to obey them or to cast them out. How do you dare say that there are two beginnings, the one good and the other evil, and that the enemy lords it over the good that is on earth and God over the one in heaven? And if this were so, how come did He teach us to say in our prayer: ‘Our Father Who

¹²⁶ Matthew 5:3.

¹²⁷ After Acts 20:34.

¹²⁸ After Hebrews 13:4.

¹²⁹ Matthew 19:6.

art in heaven, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?¹³⁰ That is why God is the Creator and Maker of heaven, earth, and every thing alive. What demon taught you to trample on the holy icons, the life-giving cross, and the other holy vessels, and even more daringly and without fear touch the holy misteries as if [these were] simple bread, and pollute the Christian food and drink and when admonished, swear without shame and fear with all kinds of oaths? This is why you are truly foes of the law, criminals against the Gospels, enemies of the faith, seducers, deceivers, oath-breakers, liars, and you swear without shame and take oaths. God said this: "I am telling you not to swear, etc."¹³¹ But when you are denounced as heretics you are seized by fear; you condemn the Mesalian religion as evil and curse it, seeking to justify yourself with terrifying pledges and believe you are not in sin. Yet, at the slightest sign of respite you return to your blasphemous faith as dogs to their vomit!"

When the blessed Theodosius told them such and similar things they stood there as if they were mute. Having seen them completely shamed, the tsar rejoiced mightily and so did the entire pious council. The house of David triumphed and the house of Saul was brought low, as the scripture would say. The lie having been exposed, those of evil fame were seized by great shame. Lazarus, who perceived his mistake, took to penance until the end of his days. The dirty Bosota and his like-minded disciple Stephen froze like stones. The pious tsar, having seen their useless pseudo-wisdom, ordered their faces branded with hot irons and drove them out from his domain for good. The council having completed its work and its bright deed accomplished, everyone returned to their place. And the divine and zealous man, having come back to his dwelling, continued to add labor to the labor and care to the care.

But what happened then, what miracle did God perform, wishing to glorify the one who pleased Him? It is not possible to hide the light under a lid for long; it has to be put on the candelabre and enlighten everyone with its teaching and wisdom.¹³² The deeds of the divine man resembled a stream descending from the top of the hill, whose sweet waters, fast and foaming, attract to themselves, on account of the deserted

¹³⁰ Matthew 6:9–10; Luke 11:2.

¹³¹ Matthew 5:34.

¹³² Matthew 5:15.

and forgotten place, every kind of animal that avoids the trace and threat of man, and satiates and calms the fever of their thirst. Once he had settled for good in the mountaneous place which was customarily called Kefalarevo, word about him flew faster than a bird of the air, spreading all over not only among the Bulgarian people but among the Serbians, the Hungarians, and the Vlachs as well, and even among those who live near Mesembria. Those who loved the monastic life flocked to him like deer thirsting for a water spring, as it is said. He directed the first steps of the neophytes; others he acquainted with the deeds; still others he instructed in the visions. Above all, however, and mostly, he taught them to forsake their desires, have no attraction to anything in the present [world], and with a sense of dignity despise all transient things which disappear like smoke or the waters of fast-running streams, or like the blows of the immaterial winds. He was full of all kinds of virtuous instruction; his humble sermons were delivered with pathos; he came closest to the pious custom and the divine grace because of which his face overflowed with joy and his soul was full of bliss.

[There was] a monk by the name of Theodosius who was rough and ignorant in word and deed. He donned the monastic habit but did not seek a teacher for himself. He followed his own will and spent his live in vanity. He loved fasting and asceticism and tormented himself, wandering about forests and hills. The devil saw that he was susceptible to anything and pushed him wherever he wished. He spent not a short amount of time like this, keeping strictly to his ideas. Misunderstanding the word of the Gospel where it says: “Whoever wants to follow me, let them deny themselves, take their cross, and follow me,”¹³³ the poor wretch began to visit towns and villages and proclaim that he was a teacher. He taught women to divorce their husbands and divorced men from women as well, thus opposing, the wretch, the lawful decrees. In the beginning, evil was so strong that it caused a mob of women to follow him; indeed, not only women but even youngsters and some men as well. He dressed them all in the monastic image and together with them visited deserts, caves, and places abandoned by God. They were an ugly and disgusting sight to behold. He used to take off his clothes and completely naked walked ahead of them, ordering that they too, walk naked, without a piece of clothing on themselves. What an unbearable shame! He commanded them to walk not in any other way,

¹³³ Matthew 16:24.

but stepping in his steps, lined up behind him, because, he said, this is how Christ's disciples walked. And they, at the instigation of the devil, eagerly joined in this insanity. When evening fell, what a shame! They all gathered together in some house having neither fear of God nor at least a sense of natural shame. Having lost all of their senses, they lived like lunatics and beasts. Many of them, however, resisted the devil who led them to dishonor. When this dishonorable shame spread about among many people, the divine Theodosius learned about it. Indignation seized his heart; having perceived the cunning of the demon, he diligently prayed to God on behalf of those who were deceived, without, however, despising the diseased. His spiritual insight led him to the deceiver. He did not attack him cruelly or with threats—what a generous soul!—but with sweet and meek words that are bound to attract the soul pointed out to him the trick of the demon and led him to knowledge of the truth, indeed, not only him, but all those who had followed him mindlessly and like beasts as well. Having realized that he had been deceived as if by a dream, he came to knowledge of the truth along with all those who had followed his blasphemous doctrine. Some of them are still alive, keeping to the strictest kind of asceticism.

However, the devil, well-versed in hatred, most cunning and disgusting, and accustomed to tempt people, began a new war against the pure and orthodox faith thinking, I believe, to cut off the tsar from the pure and sincere love of the spiritually great and honorable man which strengthened the Orthodox faith. Yet even such cunning did not remain hidden from the wisest one. The attack served to highlight the zeal of the marvelous father. When the sly and ungrateful Jewish people rose against God who created them, they took to spreading all sorts of iniquity. First, these God-hated people killed the prophets, sparing not even those who foretold His coming. After that, they went against the Savior Himself and did not cease the uproar even until [His] crucifixion and death. For that [the Lord] deprived the Jews of His inheritance, I mean, of the Kingdom, the Throne, the Prophets, the Anointing, and the Appearance, to cut it short, of everything, and gave them over to the Roman people to despoil them. Since then they spread all over the world and so will they be until the end of the century. Yet they, stone-hearted and not comprehending what David said, "In my wrath I swore that they will not enter my resting place," dared touch even the Lord Christ and our most pure Lady and Mother of God, and their icons, holy for so many years. They are monsters of the line of Korah and

Dathan, grand-children of the Babylonian confusion.¹³⁴ That was not all. They shamelessly blasphemed against the holy temples and destroyed what was brought into them. They uttered other nonsense which it is not permissible to put down in writing: dishonoring priests, slandering icons, and committing other unseemly acts.

The reason of all that unlawful and iniquitous courage of the Jews was that they counted on the reigning tsarina, for she was of their blood.¹³⁵ Yet they made a great mistake in stirring up all that trouble, for she was pious and Orthodox and did not at all accept the blasphemies uttered against the Orthodox faith. Having pure faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and his most pure Mother and all the saints as a whole, she built many monasteries and churches for the glory of God.

Having heard of that and having taken along his fellow-dweller, the like-minded Roman, the zealot of piety set off to see the tsar. Requesting an audience in private, he explained to him those [people's] improper endeavors and the extent to which they had fallen prey to hatred. He stirred the tsar's zeal to such an extent that he ordered that a council be called without delay. The tsar was ashamed of the virtues of the man and strove to emulate his zeal. The venerable zealot was not content with that but stirred up to zeal the tsarina and the patriarch as well. And so, on the tsar's order, the council convened.¹³⁶ The tsar took the place of honor together with his sons, I mean, Shishman and Asen,¹³⁷ in the palace that he had recently built. There were the patriarch Lord Theodosius, then the most holy metropolitan of Great Preslav, the foremost see, Dorotheus, the metropolitan of Dristra Zaccary, the metropolitan of Ovech Lazarus, the metropolitan of Lovech Parthenius, the metropolitan of Philippopolis Emanuel, the metropolitan of Sredets Leontius, the metropolitan of Madit-without see Jacob, the bishop Dositheus, and the archimandrite Joanikius of the Great Lavra of the Holy Forty Martyrs. The following venerable fathers were present as

¹³⁴ After Numbers 16:1–33.

¹³⁵ Sarah, the daughter of a wealthy Jewish family converted to Christianity before her marriage to Tsar Ioan Alexander in the 1340s and adopted the name Theodora ("Gift of God").

¹³⁶ For the date of the council see below.

¹³⁷ Alexander's sons from the marriage to Sarah-Theodora. From the sons of his first marriage to the Vlach Princess Theodora, Michael Asen and Ioan Asen IV had been killed by the Ottomans in the 1340s and Sratsimir was already in his apanage of Vidin.

well who came from the desert with Theodosius and were full of all kinds of divine virtue: the holy hieromonk Sabba, hieromonk Timothy, hieromonk Dionisius, and many other monks.

With a clear voice he preached the Orthodox faith: that the born-in-one divine Word, having assumed our flesh from the virgin blood of the most pure Mother of God and being a perfect God became a perfect human as well for our salvation; that whoever does not worship the incarnated God Christ and His Mother, painted on an icon in human image shall be cursed and judged together with the infidels. Furthermore, they [cursed] the blasphemous and God-hated heresy of the Bogomils, that is, of the Mesalians, as well as the other, newly-appeared heresy of Barlaam and Akindin, and determined that their adherents and devotees should be driven far away from their dioceses so that in the future the country of Bulgaria be cleansed for good from such impure weeds and the pious faith shined so pure that even the rays of the sun would pale in comparison, as some would have put it.

The faithful Tsar Ioan Alexander, in full accord with the law and most carefully, investigated the above mentioned blasphemous Jews and, having found the guilty, decreed that they were to be put to death. However, because of his humanity he cancelled the death sentence, ordering punishment by torture instead so that they served as a lesson to others and no one dared blaspheme. One of them, however, converted, not so much out of conviction but because fearing death. Appearing contrite, he appealed to the holy council and the pious tsar to allow him to join in the belief of our immaculate and pure faith. With the assent and decision of the entire council he was admitted and instructed into the faith, baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and professed that [our] God Christ is the Son of God and was thus included in the immaculate flock of God. The other two, however, did not wish to come closer to the true light and become enlightened but pleaded to be left in the darkness of their iniquity and were subjected to torture. Having heard this, the people hurled themselves on them. A loud cry was raised and the people killed one of them and he expelled his polluted soul. The other was taken away; his blasphemous tongue, which revolted against the heavens was cut off together with his deceitful lips and ears, which did not attend well to the divine law.

On the decree of the tsar, the patriarch, and the entire council a charter was written down to testify and confirm for the coming generations that no Jew would dare, on whatever occasion, do anything against

our true and pious faith. God made them slaves to all peoples; let them then live like slaves and not like lords. God vanquished them, made them His enemies, and consigned them to eternal disgrace; because of that their disgrace will stay and will continue for ever. After the bright council was finished, the roll was signed by the tsar with red letters and sealed with the tsar's seal in the twenty-eight year of his reign, in the year of the creation of the world 6868 [1359–1360].¹³⁸ Everyone went back to their place and there was a great joy among the faithful. Unbearable shame seized the God-fighting Jews who were threatened by complete destruction.

And so, having fought valiantly and induced divine zeal in the tsarina, the high priests, and the entire ecclesiastical estate the divine Theodosius achieved a shiny victory over the enemies of God. Like a brave commander who goes to war and vanquishes and drives away the enemy, forcing it to flee, so he [crushed] every endeavor of the opponents of God and went back to his dwelling rejoicing. Undescribable elation reigned among the hermits, and he went back to the strict and angelic silence.

Once, while he kept vigils with the brothers and encouraged them to strive in the spiritual feats, reminding them about the accomplishments and ascetism of the ancient fathers, he was asked by the brothers: "How come, if God is Almighty and everything depends on His will, the devil is so bold against humankind? Not to speak about the patriarchs, the prophets, and others: he dared [oppose] the Lord and Master Himself, seducing Him not one time, but twice and thrice, as is witnessed in the divine book of the Gospels. Even today he does not let us rest and torments us day and night, sometime with lazyness, on other occasions with insubordination and other desires of all kinds. We beg you to teach us how to evade his thick-woven nets."

He kept silent for a while, then opened his mouth, took a breath and began speaking in an unusually low voice: "Brothers and fathers, the devil was not given the power to rule over everyone—not at all!—but since he was thrown out of heaven on account of his pride, he seduced the first man and became the cause for Adam having been chased out of Paradise. Until the crucifixion of the Savior and His resurrection, due to his shameless and untamable spirit he used to hurl himself cruelly upon the entire humankind because God, who knows everything,

¹³⁸ The council actually convened in 1358.

allowed him. In recent times, for our salvation and on our behalf our Lord Jesus Christ took on the flesh from the Holy Virgin and Mother of God and became a new Adam so that the divinity in us, which we inherited from Adam, is elevated again to its pristine beauty. [He] suffered crucifixion and death and, descending into Hell, destroyed the schemes of the enemy, put to shame the devil himself and made him the butt of laughter of humankind—not only of men, but of women, virgins, and children of tender age as well. This is why the forefather of God, David, said to God: “The enemy is deprived of weapons for You destroyed his fraudulent edifices,” that is, his ruses and deceptions. Today, it is in our power to accept his sly insinuations and suffer with him, or to oppose his tricks and reside and be always with God. For when the power of the enemy is broken down, it is of no consequence for those who disregard it, as are all of his deceptions. God sent His arrows, the apostles, to nullify his machinations, and multiplied the lightnings, and destroyed them¹³⁹ for His are the ends of this world and the mountaintops. Since then He granted us the power to smash the forces of the enemy like snakes and scorpions. This is why you should not lower your guard nor should you be afraid of his incursions for God will help you escape from his traps. All you have to do is persist, and put your soul in it, and show diligence in every virtue, for those who plant generously will have an abundant harvest. Let nothing scare you: neither hunger, nor thirst, nor nakedness, nor persecution, nor sword, nor wounds, nor indeed any other thing that brings about grief for “the sufferings of this time are nothing compared to the future glory that will appear in us.”¹⁴⁰ Remember our ancient fathers, who spent their entire lives in all kinds of need and scarcity, walked about dressed in sheepskins and goat skins and dwelled in holes in the ground and under stone ruins, and lived in tears, humility, and constant crying, expecting consolation from God only, having no rest and dying every minute. They placed their trust in the One who opens His hands and satiates with grace every living being to receive [from Him] that undescribable bliss that had been prepared for ages and generations for the righteous. Oh, godly diligence! Oh, sweet forethought! To put it another way: “Our souls thirst for You, God, like the deer thirsts for water springs; our souls crave God, the Almighty, the Living One.

¹³⁹ The devil's deceptions.

¹⁴⁰ Romans 8:18.

When will we come, when will we appear before the face of God? Tears were our bread, day and night!” Blessed, thrice blessed are those who will be deemed worthy of such bliss; the wretched and unworthy will don cursed garments instead of wedding robes. If they dare enter into the blessed source of light, the palace will be shut for them and they will hear the voice of the Bride, addressing them: “Go away from me, I do not know you.”¹⁴¹ Oh, moving utterance! Oh, indignation of the Master! These are the weeds about which God spoke in the Gospel: “I will burn the weeds with everlasting fire.”¹⁴² And the righteous and the blessed, the martyrs and all the saints will offer their feats like presents: the righteous and the prophets, their deeds for the faith and their prophecies; the apostles, the persecutions and exiles they suffered on account of Christ’s incarnation; the martyrs, the beatings, wounds, and severing of limbs; in short, all saints together will offer their own deeds according to what has been written, that every one will present their own deeds, good or evil. There will be no one then to answer to the righteous Judge, for no one will open their mouth. When all heavenly powers raise and the entire earth shakes and trembles, who would dare open their mouth? There will be no need to ask. Because every one will be transparent like glass for the One who gazes at them and who will show in detail the good or evil deeds they have in them, regardless of the body that carries them. From the bodies of the pure and the celibate will sprout their sufferings and feats; from the bodies of the polluted and the iniquitous, their tainted and defiled deeds. It will be all shame and desperation for the sinners. How much will they suffer when the angles, cruel and merciless, will separate the righteous from the sinners like sheep from goats! Then a river of fire will run before the seat of Judgment and it will swallow those who have been found unworthy.

Knowing all these things, let us cleanse ourselves from any carnal and spiritual pollution in this life while we still have time so that when our goodness is revealed, we can put on glory and honor rather than shame. Let our minds strive for God, for spiritual visions, for the goodness of Paradise, for the eternal dwellings, for the angelic images, and for life in the beyond! Because our life, according to the apostle, is in Heaven, from where the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, will come

¹⁴¹ After Matthew 25:1–12.

¹⁴² After Matthew 13:30.

who will transform us from our mortal existence into His eternal and everlasting glory. Let us reflect upon where are today the souls of the righteous and the sinners and how the Second Coming of the great God and our Savior will come to pass, at which time, according to His divine Gospel, the heavens will pass with blares, the forces will be destroyed in blazes, and the earth and everything upon it will burn down. Also, how will the soul return to the restituted body? What will be the council like which will gather the humans from Adam to the end of the world? In what order will the righteous enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and in what order the sinners, subjected to eternal torture? Let us think about this day and night, and instruct ourselves in weeping and tears, sending our prayers to the most generous God. Our Creator will not despise us.” These, and other words did Theodosius tell to the monks and moved them deeply to tears and weeping, stinging them with the sting of diligence.

A long time after that, the Israelite¹⁴³ people enslaved all of Macedonia¹⁴⁴ and did not leave even the brothers there to practice silence in peace. For this reason he had to move again. But because of his many virtues the tsar did not give him leave to go far away and found a very strong cave for him about twenty *poprishta* away from Tarnov. To persuade his *bolijars*, he walked ahead of them and carried sand in his own lap at a distance of three *poprishta* because the place was a wilderness. In this manner a strong stairway was constructed and a decent and very beautiful church was erected together with many cells. There he resided in silence, perfecting himself spiritually day and night. Many monks flocked to the place, happy to derive from him all kinds of useful things for their souls.

There was a monk called Job, who lived in the *Žleb* [?] lands. He intended to follow the monastic life in a similar way. But the devil saw that he obeyed him in everything and sent him different kinds of phantasms. At times he appeared to him transformed into a bright angel; at times he came dark and gloomy as he is, together with his servants; at times he filled his cell with shining lights. He managed to conquer him to such an extent that he asked him to worship him, calling himself Christ who had come to save the people. However, the divine Kindness, which wants all humans to be saved and to arrive at

¹⁴³ The “Ishmaelite” people, the Ottoman Turks.

¹⁴⁴ Thrace.

the true wisdom did not leave him perish completely. He, therefore, went to the cave of the venerable man and explained to him the case in all detail. Theodosius realized that this was demonic and cunning and alien to the monastic and Christian tradition. He explained to him carefully the tricks of the demons and their attacks, prompted him to spiritual accomplishments, and told him to have no fear of anything, not to be afraid of them as they come to him as apparitions, or speak laud, or knock, or throw themselves from the river banks, or create halos, or try to frighten him, in short, not to pay attention to anything. Having fortified himself with the words of the father, he went back to his cell full of joy.

The divine man and treasure of virtues Theodosius resided there for three years, adhering strictly to the rules, which he had adopted from the beginning. The murderous devil could not stand for long the virtues of the man and contrived to catch him in a trap and harm him, hamper his virtuous striving in the ascetic life, and succeeded in this. For God, who knows how, allowed that to him happened what happened to Job and other virtuous men: through the temptations of the devil their fame spread, [tested] as gold is tested in the furnace. This happened to the divine Theodosius so that he too, as a servant of God, got elevated and his virtue became known to everyone while the man-hating and sly demon was put to shame.

Then a certain sickness befell him, and a bad one it was, caused by the sly one. In about twenty months he became so emaciated that his body, having been previously exhausted by [the practice of] virtue and weakened by fast, became barely recognizable to those who knew him; they saw only bones and sinews. He had no doubt in the outcome; nonetheless, he did not take it easy. He still sat up in his bed and, leaning, exercised himself in the vision of God and incessant prayer. He kept studying the divine scriptures to grasp the meaning with which the divine spirit had imbued them. He carried on in this fashion, tormented by bodily illness, and willed to write solely to me, in the city of Constantine, for blessing and spiritual pleasure—be it because he wanted to see me now as oecumenical patriarch and receive my blessing, or because we used to be brothers and like-minded mates who assisted together that venerable and marvelous Gregory the Sinaite. I rejoiced to receive the letter: it seemed to me that I had received something great and very beautiful and in my great joy I did not hide [the missive] of such a man, but diligently announced it to the holy synod, which received it as eagerly as if it had been God's tablets. On account of his request

we wrote back together, as he wanted in his letter, that he may come in person and receive the gift and the spiritual blessing of the most holy Church of God and its most holy synod. We did do that and made it known that we most fervently desired the arrival of the man. The patriarch of Tarnov would not agree to that at all. However, as a true man of God and citizen of the upper Jerusalem, when he received the letter of the patriarch [Kallistos], and feeling that the end of his life was close, he wished to go to him as soon as possible. Boarding a ship together with four of his disciples,¹⁴⁵ he sailed for the city of Constantine. There he entered the divine St Sophia, be it because he wanted to enjoy its beauty or because he wanted to bow to it as the mother of all churches. Having seen it, he admired it greatly. After that he paid a personal visit to the oecumenical patriarch and received his blessing. He was filled with great and marvelous joy, delighting in the discussion with the teacher and patriarch of the universe who had been his brother and peer and who together with him assisted, as it was mentioned above, that common father of theirs, the marvelous Sinaite.

The patriarch received him with utmost kindness and honored him with great dignity. He ordered that they spent together day and night. He discoursed with him and acquainted him with every single thing which pertained to [the affairs of] the conciliar and patriarchal church. Studying diligently and carefully the divine decretals and laws they arrived at the rule that postulated that no one should dare anoint with the most holy and great chrism in any other way but only before baptism, as it is recored in the roll with the decretals: "And if someone else confesses to not knowing when he had been baptized and there are no witnesses for that then let him be baptized without any doubt and rebuke." As they read that chapter, the venerable man confessed to the most holy oecumenical patriarch that he had been granted holy baptism but had not been through the great anointing on account of the long distance to his place and because of the scarcity of the great and most divine chrism. This is why he asked the good shepherd to anoint him with the most divine and light-giving chrism. Seeing that the patriarch was eager to do it, he had himself and his four disciples anointed by the patriarch according to the custom of the holy and divine church. For, as the holy Fathers [of Nicaea] bequeathed to posterity, no one

¹⁴⁵ Among them were Euthymius, the last Bulgarian patriarch and Cyprian, the future metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia.

could go through the holy rites without been first reborn through the holy baptism. And as they spent some time in like-mindedness, they multiplied the fruit of virtue.

When Theodosius desired to apply himself diligently to the permanent silence which he craved, the patriarch fulfilled his wish in this too. He joyfully received what he wished for, because he sent him to his own monastery, built to honor the great and most glorious martyr Mamant.¹⁴⁶ This foundation is truly filled with all kinds of silence for, as everyone knows, it is located outside the reigning city and is therefore so far away from the world and its noise that human voice was barely heard there and could not even get close, because the place was off limits to lay people. It was only proper, really proper, that the divine martyr, who avoided the company of the impious and wandered all over the mountains where he was a shepherd who milked does to provide righteous food for himself, received in his famous foundation such a follower. Therefore, the patriarch had a cell built for him there and decreed that he should enjoy his silence and reside in it as he pleased.

Having spent a long time there, [Theodosius'] illness intensified and his body got gradually wasted. However, as much as the external man melted away, so much his spiritual glory flourished, shone, and became brighter, as the divine Paul said: "Our inner man gets renewed with as much as the outer man wastes away."¹⁴⁷ Seeing that he was running out of strength and would soon go to God, he called his disciples and told them the following.

Above all, he commanded them to guard strongly and unflinchingly the pious faith of the conciliar and apostolic church and its Orthodox dogma; to flee, as it is correct, from the heresy of the Bogomils, that is, the Masalians, and from the heresies of Barlaam, Akindin, Gregory, and Athanasius;¹⁴⁸ to believe, as we do since the beginning, and to neither add something nor take anything away in order not to end up being cursed as were those who followed Akindin, saying that the divine glory of Christ, which appeared on Mount Tabor and gloriously, strongly, and marvelously shone there, was created there at that

¹⁴⁶ The monastery of St Mamant in Constantinople was the residence of the patriarch.

¹⁴⁷ After 2 Corinthians 4:16.

¹⁴⁸ Besides the recent heresy of Barlaam and Akindin Theodosius condemns ancient Monophysitism and Nestorianism as well.

time;¹⁴⁹ also, to guard stalwartly God's holy commandments because the one who guards carefully those two [?] things truly is a Christian and will be called so; furthermore, to love the denial of the will, the selfless and humble life, the fast and the heremites life so that they get used to putting desires to sleep; to tame anger, to reign in the cravings of the flesh, and to drive out spiritual darkness—in short, to dry up the wet and carnal delights for when their spiritual eye is clear, it will look around, as the divine David said, and in the morning will kill off the sinners on earth, that is, the sly thoughts of our heart; to think constantly of death and have always before their eyes the frightful Judgment of our Savior, which will one day try everyone and will deal with everyone accordingly; to never tire of perceiving God in reality and never abandon the wise deed [of hesychasm] for it is a mighty weapon untouchable to the enemy's forces; to keep with all their strength to the true love, the peak of virtue, and be kind and loving to all; to shy away from slander, anger, wrath, bad memories, and envy, which darken the soul and alienate it from God.

Having instructed them in all these and other [things], the divine man, with spiritual and fatherly generosity, left to his disciples [his] indelible legacy. And they, diligently listening up the farewell words of the father, were suffused in tears, wallowed at his feet and with appropriate wailing sweetly kissed his hands and feet. He waived his hand to impose silence and commanded them to get up. After they rose, he sat up, opened his mouth and recited the Credo from the bottom of his heart; confessed and confirmed the entire ecclesiastical tradition that the holy and apostolic church bequeathed to the faithful people; and cursed those who had cursed [the tradition], above all the evil-famed heresy of the iniquitous Barlaam and Akindin. He then received the communion with the divine and fearful mysteries of Christ and lay down back again. Immediately, an undescrivable sweet aroma filled the entire room. He saw the coming of the angels and his face shone with a marvelously bright light. He pointed the angels to his disciples with his finger, saying: "Look at God's powers!" He smiled sweetly and marvelously, beholding them, and then yielded up his soul in the hands

¹⁴⁹ The issue about the light on Mount Tabor was a central doctrine in hesychasm. The hesychasts saw it as the uncreated energy of God that allowed Christ's disciples (and practicing hesychasts) to know God. Opponents of hesychasm pointed that only God is uncreated. His light or energy is created and cannot, therefore, lead to the mystical knowledge of God claimed by the hesychasts.

of God; he went to the One whom he desired so much to receive the reward for his long travails, on November 27.¹⁵⁰ The patriarch and the clergy and the high priests buried him solemnly with candles and all honor because he loved him as much as the great elder and teacher of whom they were honored to be disciples. And the most amazing and great thing about our most marvelous father Theodosius was that in the same evening when his teacher was commemorated, I mean the marvelous father Gregory the Sinaite, the evening when that one went to God, this divine man too gave up his soul to God, wholeheartedly emulating his teacher even in this.

After we studied, as is proper, these and other things, we presented his life and marvelous being in the world for the benefit of many and the remembrance of the godly. Those who desire to live a life in God should strive to live like he did so that their diligence and industry gets multiplied. As for ourselves, we described the life of the righteous man to receive the reward for the effort and through his prayers to become his mate in the eternal residence.

It is appropriate to relate about the already many times mentioned Roman. He was a virtuous and famous man, a spiritual zealot in everything much like the blessed Theodosius, truly an ascete and a hermit and guardian of the divine commandments. When the divine man, I am speaking about the blessed Theodosius, set off for the city of Constantine he left behind the venerable Roman as a mentor of his foundation and entrusted him with the guidance of the brethren. He, as soon as he took over the foundation¹⁵¹ and the leadership of the brothers, instructed them diligently, striving to emulate in everything the blessed Theodosius. Because of this all those in the region who came to him often enjoyed his prayers and his directions. For his part, he kept unwaveringly to the strictest asceticism. He partook of food once a day and then not too much of it and of poor quality. He used a small measure of wine, mostly on account of his bodily illness, for he was sick of the bad disease which exhausted him completely, called in the Slavic tongue whopping cough. It tormented him mightily. On top of this, he performed the vigils so dedicately that entire nights went on without him catching a wink of sleep. Only at dawn he napped somewhat and even then he was engulfed in thought. Recalling the farewell with the

¹⁵⁰ Either 1362 or 1363.

¹⁵¹ The monastery of Kephalarovo.

marvelous Theodosius, he did not wish to tarry in this life; he wished as soon as possible to separate from it and delight in the blessed life. Because of that he added labor to the labor and suffering to the suffering. Spending his life like this he renewed himself, so to speak, for the above mentioned sickness strengthened him spiritually as it was eating him up and exhausting his body. Even though he was so emaciated he did not pay attention to his affliction and many times preferred to console the brethren, calming them and urging them to spiritual accomplishments. When he saw his end coming, he called them all together. He fortified them in the fear of God and arranged well everything pertaining to the foundation. Having enjoyed the terrifying and divine mysteries and offered his peace to everyone, he yielded up his soul in the hands of God on February 17.¹⁵² Having taken care of him as becomes a father, the brethren buried him solemnly, performed on his grave everything that was proper, and gave praise to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, then, and in the eternal centuries, amen.

- 143 Life of Romil of Vidin *by Gregory, his disciple, late fourteenth century.* The Greek *Life* of Romil was composed by Gregory, otherwise unknown but apparently well educated clerk and disciple of the saint, and soon thereafter was translated into Bulgarian by another of Romil's disciples. The author of that version was a native speaker and his knowledge of the life of the saintly hermit and hesychast allowed him to approach Gregory's *Life* quite freely, adding, correcting, and interpreting his prototype. Except for the information in the *Life*, nothing more is known about Romil, a child of a mixed Greek-Bulgarian marriage. He was born in the first quarter of the fourteenth century in Vidin, northwestern Bulgaria, and given the Slavic name Rusko. He must have died in the 1380s since he spent the last few years of his life in the monastery of Ravanitsa, the foundation which Prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic founded in 1382. His feast day is January 16 according to the Slavic version; the Greek version has November 1. His cult flourished locally, among the hesychasts in Mount Athos and in Ravanica. Edition: Peter A. Šjirku, *Monaha Gregorija žitija prepodobnago Romila* (St Petersburg, 1900) (the Slavic text) and Frederik Halkin, "Un ermite des Balkans au XIV^e siècle. La Vie grecque inédite de Saint Romylos," *Byzantion* (1961), 111–147 (the Greek version).

Month of January, 16th day. Life and deeds and some of the miracles of our newly appeared father and hermit Romil. Written by Gregory,

¹⁵² The year is unclear.

his disciple, hermit and calligrapher¹⁵³ in the foothills of the holy Mount Athos, at the place called Melana.

There is nothing either sweeter or worthier of the effort of those eager to do good works than to describe the sufferings and struggles of the saints who spent their lives in a blessed and God-pleasing manner so that the account guides those who will live after them to zeal and emulation. Such as we have been created, let us keep immaculate what has been made in the image of God and turn our spiritual eye toward everything that is honorable and praiseworthy. Let us wish that it is something becoming to us and let us desire to possess it.

It is good, therefore, to see with our spiritual eye the feats of men who lived in perfection and suffered on account of virtue, and derive from that a certain benefit. Deeds that can be observed and praised become worthy of being sought after and desired and invite the spectators to perform them. Accounts of such deeds bring about significant benefit when the tale is sent out from the ear [mouth?] of those who know to the ear of those who are ignorant.

Were the memory of such marvelous accounts remains correct and strong and impervious to the poison of forgetfulness, which destroys it and brings about darkness it would have been unnecessary, I believe, to record these things in writing. Hence [the written record] will be for the benefit of future generations who wish to live wisely for time makes things fade, brings old age and death to bodies, darkens memories, and causes those striving for good to be forgotten. No one has the right to blame us for we plan to describe the God-pleasing and virtuous life of the blessed man, the teacher of true love of God, the warm zealot of the heavenly being. I beg those who want to understand well to trust what is said here for many cannot get close to the good because of envy or lack of skill. I did not add myself to his grace and power in that feat. Still, God the Benefactor will be praised and those who listen will desire virtue for their zeal will incite them like a sting to similar feats. For the sting of zeal, it is said, embeds in the souls of the audience the story of those who shone with virtues, especially those who shone recently. None of them neglected the life in God, but those who had grown up listening to the divine scriptures know that those who seek God now are worthier of praise than those who lived in ancient times

¹⁵³ The text has *dobropisec*, or “good writer.”

and during the time of Christ. The words that the Lord said to the great Pahomius came to pass. When the blessed and first of the holy hermits suffered for God and in the end asked Him what will happen to future hermits, and said, "Lord, remember that Thou promised me that my spiritual seed will not perish," he heard the words of the Lord Himself: "Courage, for the root of your spiritual seed will never dry out. The simple people who want to get saved in those times from the darkness that will fall on their carelessness will be worthier than those who live today for [the contemporaries] have you before themselves like a lamp and live enlightened by the light of your virtue. However, those who will come in the end, in the last, dark times, if they manage to steer clear of the evil lie and reach the truth of their own will, applying their reason, without anyone instructing them on the path of truth, then, I am telling you the truth, those who are now famous for their perfect ascetism and live immaculate lives will enjoy the same bliss as those of the last time."

I said all these things in brief so that the God-pleasing nature of the blessed man becomes clear as well as many of his good works, as will be explained in due course and in detail.

Therefore, it is appropriate to relate first about the fatherland that engendered him, and from what parents in the flesh did hail this most marvelous among the hermits and dedicated servant of God, Romil.

This venerable man was nourished by the most glorious city of Vidin, which lies at the river Danube, and which it will not be a mistake to call a land of abundance. His parents were pious and God-fearing, and were not too wealthy, but possessed enough to satisfy themselves without deprivation and to give alms to the poor, as it is proper for the people who honor the name of Christ. His father was Greek and his mother was Bulgarian by origin. Of such a blessed couple, for we have to call blessed the parents on account of that blessed one, was born this predetermined for virtue and predestined to shine in virtue youth Rusko. Such was the name given to him by his parents at his birth at the divine font, that is, at holy baptism. They raised him like the pious, God-fearing people they were, well-versed in the divine instructions and teachings. As time went on and he grew up, the grace of the Holy Spirit that was in him transpired in his questions, smart answers, and divine words in his conversation with the people. Because it was not fitting for such a bright youth to remain without instruction in the written word of the divine teaching, his parents handed him over to a certain teacher for instruction. He obeyed his teacher as it was

proper and surpassed all the children which entered school ahead of him. The most amazing thing was that not only did he outshine all of them in a short time but, what's more, he taught them to give up the usual childish games and the unwise spending of time. Because youth goes along with mindlessness and arrogance leads to perdition, for that reason, my kind one, we have to diligently and with attention exercise and apply ourselves to our studies. He was praised a good deal for that. And not only his peers and fellow-students but even the teacher himself admired this wise youth Rusko on account of his precocious wisdom and piety; so did many of those who lived in the city as well. Words of his intelligence and prudence were always on their lips.

However, his parents, being in truth carnal parents, did not foresee the youth's love of God and the divine wish he harbored in his heart and decided to tie him up in marriage. They declared their decision by speaking to the youth but he did not wish to hear neither their words nor even their voices for he had made up his mind to leave lay turbulence and adopt the monastic life. How, therefore, could they persuade the zealot of purity and divert him from the love of God and the grace that strengthened him invisibly? Then, his parents resolved to force their wish upon the unwilling youth, against his will. He, the one whose soul wished only for the intransient and eternal goods, figured that out and fled the place of his birth. He reached to Zagora and went to the city of this diocese formerly called Torvon and now Tarnov, where he settled in one of the local monasteries named "The Mother of God who shows the way" [*Odigitria*].¹⁵⁴ The head of the foundation asked him, as it is customary: "Where do you come from, my son, and how did you get here?" He answered and told the elder everything about himself adding: "I came here because I want to be a monk." The elder received him with joy, cut off the hair of his head and re-named him Roman. Being a man with the gift of vision, he perceived from that short conversation the future unconditional obedience and piety of the youth and promptly initiated him in the ecclesiastical service. He served well and appropriately for some years and the elder rejoiced at that, observing his daily adornment of the church and even more so his meek character and humility. For the blessed man was indeed humble more than anyone else in image, custom, and character, as it was fitting, and this will be testified for not only by me but by those as

¹⁵⁴ The monastery *Odigitria* was on the hill Sveta Gora, one of Tarnovo's hills.

well who knew him from the beginning, because he made the prudent ones realize at first glance the humility which was residing in his soul. He reached, as we said, the extremity of humility.

The citizens of the said city of Tarnov and those who live close to that place know that there is a nearby mountain called with the local name, Ustie, as well as a hill in one of the city districts which as of old bore the name Holy Mount where many monks had, and still have, their residence. This is where the said sufferer dwelled and transformed himself. As for love for the neighbor, did he practice it sparingly or only partially as some said, inspired by envy? Not at all! Who was more accomplished in it than him and fully demonstrated it in corporeal and spiritual deed? He gave away generously what pertained to the body, ever happier to give than receive. The most amazing thing was that although he lived himself on crumbs, as it becomes a beggar or a hermit, he never disregarded the queen of virtues; on the contrary, he always strove, like a true servant of God, to fulfill above all the duty of love. If he happened to learn that someone among those dwelling in that mountain was being vexed by old age or some affliction, he caught fish, hanged them through the gills, and then silently, in the deep of night, arrived at the cell of the afflicted, hung up the food, and promptly left. When morning came and the denizen of cell went out and found the hanging fish he rejoiced at the unexpected appearance of the fish. He would marvel in himself and would ask who would do such a good work. Turning back, he would figure out and say: "No one else but the marvelous good Roman would do something like this!"

This is how corporeal deeds and things displayed the love of the venerable. It was the same with his instruction and direction of the monks of like character and the novices; one cannot account for all he did with words. With God's assistance he possessed the generosity of mercy. It is not possible to describe his gift of meekness and wealth of tears, nor is it possible to compare him to anyone else. In him the words of the prophet came true: "I will pour tears on my bed every night and will wet my bedclothes," and "my tears became my bread day and night."

But let us get back to the subject matter of this account. His elder delighted and rejoiced seeing his obedience, diligence, and orderly nature. Yet our man was vexed in his thoughts and desired to flee again from lay disturbances and settle, like a desert-dwelling dove, at an uninhabited place, far away from the world. And when he heard about Paroria and that there a man a great in God, the Lord Gregory

(that was the name of the man) had built a foundation and daily, so to speak, called to himself souls with the trumpet of his voice and the manner of his life and offered them to God, he was so obsessed with the thought of leaving that, if it were possible, he would have obtained wings so that he could fly in the air and quickly settle there. With such a love did the rumor of the saint wound his heart! I myself heard him telling of this.

Since that moment his body was in Zagora but his soul was in the desert of Paroria. He longed to come closer to God there like deer thirsting for water springs. Yet the love and piety of the elder were in his way. For the abbot loved the good Roman so much that some time he would make obstructions, intending no offense. This is why he kept his thoughts secret but felt sad and miserable because an obsessive thought is like a wound in the heart. The thought about leaving did not give him rest. As there was no other way to accomplish what he planned, he found appropriate time and promptly revealed to the elder why he wanted to leave. When he learned of this, he [the abbot] was much saddened for he did not wish to be separated from him his entire life. However, the elder thought it out and lest he left against his will and wish openly gave him his blessing, said a prayer over him, and sent him away with much instruction. He, having taken as a fellow his peer Ilarion, one of the brothers who was in on the plan, eagerly set out for the Parorian desert.

When they reached the dwelling of the said holy father the Sinaite, they went to piously bow to the great man, as custom requires. He asked them from where they came and “Why and for what reason did you come to us?” and to this they replied by telling to the great man everything about themselves and declared that they had come because they wanted to be his disciples. The great one received them with joy for with the help of the divine grace dwelling in him he perceived their strength and will and gave to each of them appropriate duties. To Ilarion, who was the weaker of the two, he gave lighter services in the foundation but Roman, who was stronger, he entrusted with heavier and more difficult works.

At that time the great father was building the said foundation. Hence, one could see the eagerly obedient Roman go around and perform all kind of jobs. He brought logs down from the mountain or timber needed for the buildings and carried stones and water from the nearby river. It happened also that he mixed mortar with water. Apart from that he was constantly busy in the kitchen and the bakery. In all jobs

he showed himself an artful servant; he was a God-pleasing servant to the sick too, to the extent that one can say that he brought health to the sick along with his service. Everyone loved him so much because of his customary humility and love that instead of Roman they called him “Good Roman,” praising his piety and humility to everyone. He always persisted, dignified as he was in body and soul, to fulfill all of his obligations on account of the true love and warm desire he nourished for that great light and head of the foundation, the Sinaite, as per the divine words put down so well in the divine *Ladder* [*Lestvitsa*], namely that “the body persists in its duties as much as the faith blossoms in the heart”¹⁵⁵ as well as the way St Mark the ascete put it: “The Lord,” he said, “is in His commandments: is someone seeks Him, let him fulfill them and he will find Him right there.”¹⁵⁶

But let our account follow its appropriate course. When with God’s help the building of the foundation was completed those dwelling in it gave a rest to their bodies in their cells as they ought to and busied themselves with spiritual travails according to what the head, that great father the Sinaite, had apportioned to each and every one of them. Seeing that Roman’s body was still youthful and even more so was his soul, he thought in himself, being a prudent expert in the divine affairs, of giving him a job that was fitting to the disposition and the mind of this young laborer and sufferer. Let us see therefore, in more detail, of what stuff was the venerable man made even in the beginning of his monastic life and what a diligent doer of every God-pleasing task he was.

There used to be there an ancient father there, very weak bodily and even more weakened by wrath. Because of his wrath no one was able to calm him down and serve him. The great shepherd saw this and, knowing the skillful service that the good Roman provided to the sick, figured that no one else would be able to serve the father as well as he could and ordered him to attend to that sick man. One should see then the new Akakius who suffered with dignity the cruel verbal assaults of that sick old father, as the author of the *Lestvitsa* put it about those who truly obey: “I drink insults and humiliations daily like life-giving water.”¹⁵⁷ Because the old father, on top of his other illnesses, had a

¹⁵⁵ St John Climacus’ extremely influential early seventh century ascetic treatise, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, ch. 4:7.

¹⁵⁶ St Mark’s *Sermon on the Spiritual Commandments*, ch. 190.

¹⁵⁷ After *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, ch. 7.

bad stomach and was not able to easily digest food except fish, what did our laborer do? He mastered the art of fishing: during the day he knitted nets and at night caught fish and in this manner provided the old father with nourishing food. Most of the time his catch was good and his art was successful but in winter it was very difficult to catch anything because that place was very cold and the water froze into ice on account of the great cold. The snow too, lingered until the month or April. [In winter] even the depths of the lakes, which the inhabitants of that place called whirlpools, froze completely because of the cold. As we said, this prevented him from having his usual catch and because of that both of them felt wretched: the old father because he had no fish, and the good servant on account of his charge. Seeing the sick father so miserable he, as a true servant of God, suffered himself and assiduously sought out a way to continue his fishing. See now, what manner of fishing he invented; indeed the need is inventive for it brings the soul to creative findings. God granted him this novelty for he prayed much for it.

What actually happened? My mind is bewildered, my hand grows stiff and cannot write, and my eyes fill with tears, baffled by the endeavor of this sufferer. For he invented a way untested by many even, I think, by no one before. He went around the whirlpools, shoveled the snow here and there and shattered the ice with a hammer. He shivered in the great cold and excessive chill but still, with his teeth chattering, he stepped into the pool, muddied the water at the bottom with his feet and forced the fish to surface with the muddy water. Then, deploying his fish trap, he caught it. It was a strange and marvelous fishing he came up with! In the mind of that sufferer, was the pool not like the lake of the holy Forty Martyrs? Very much like it! And if someone asks how come he did not die a bodily death in the way they did, I would answer that he would not have stepped in the icy and freezing waters without compulsion had he not looked death in the eye. That is what is meant in the saying “to lay down one’s soul for the neighbor,” for those who wish to say: here, look at the feat of this labourer and firm servant of the commandments of Christ.

Once his elder, the paralyzed old man, ordered him to go and catch fish. He commanded him to fish for a certain amount of time and return promptly. But the good fisherman, seeing that the catch was good, stayed longer than the time he had been given. When he came back, the elder did not greet him with joy, even though he brought home more fish than ever, but attacked him with rude accusations, knowing

full well his patient and obedient mind. He took the fish in the cell and left the fisherman out in the open, on a night when a heavy snow fell from the sky. The weather was freezing and the poor sufferer got completely covered and could not be seen. On the morning, when they dug him out of the snow bank, they found him half-dead under the snow. I think everyone who listens and wants to understand my account will agree that this is no smaller feat than the immersion in the whirlpool and his suffering from the ice and cold, as we mentioned above.

Let our narration continue its course and relate about everything and in detail and explain to those who do not know how he thirsted for virtue from the very beginning and how he strove to emulate and obey, above all, the saintly and divine men. [The account will also relate about] his obedience, without which none of the mortals will see God face to face, as that great and divine John of the Ladder explained. Similarly, the great theologian Gregory says: “The law of obedience governs the earthly and the heavenly things, and it should not be destroyed.”¹⁵⁸ For that reason this blessed one, knowing well the benefit of obedience, strove to be perfect in the eyes of God and join in the bliss derived from submission.

When the feeble elder, his master that we spoke about above, migrated to the Lord, returning that which decays to the earth, and because that truly great light and shepherd of all those who resided there, Lord Gregory the Sinaite, had passed away earlier, one could see the blessed good Roman weeping day and night. He could not stand it to live by his own will and without submission. Much troubled by this, his soul launched a search, and he found another elder who resided in silence far away from the foundation. He had been in the beginning the master of his already mentioned mate, Ilarion. To him he now bowed his neck too, according to the law, and lived by obeying and serving him without reserve as he did with the one who had passed away.

However, it was difficult to console that elder, for there was a great famine at the time, and there was nothing to be found in the master’s cell save a little ray, which they boiled with water and ate in the place of other food. [In addition] to the suffering from that evil deprivation, they were much oppressed by most cruel bandits, which the locals called husars. They used to thrust red-hot irons in the monks’ intestines and took from them the little they had to satisfy their needs and then left,

¹⁵⁸ St Gregory the Theologian, *Second Sermon against Julian*.

leaving the servants and bondmen of God robbed of even the most necessary things. These two, the good Roman who is the subject of my account, and the said Lord Ilarion took their elder, left Paroria and returned to Zagora. There they decided to settle and reside in a place about an hour away from Tarnov, called Monkre. However, the blessed man, who immediately became known to everyone as “the good Roman” as was proper on account of his life, famous for its virtue and above all for his humility and love, I do not know why, perhaps by the divine will and for greater benefit, as the account will show later, or because of the envy of the devil, separated from his tutor, the elder, and settled even farther away in the desert. One should not hastily and easily blame the blessed man for his going away. Ilarion was there to help the elder; therefore, what happened was not that sad and heedless.

Not a long time after that the elder, who was very old and frail left this life and went to the Lord, whom he loved and desired just like Paul said, speaking and thinking like Christ: “I long to be free and be with Christ.”¹⁵⁹ When he learned about that, the man of weeping added tears to the tears and sighs to the sighs, stung incessantly by the sting of repentance. Because if it happens that a soul as easily crushed and deeply feeling as that of the blessed one sins somehow by itself and thus demolishes a feat already accomplished, it becomes, I think, inconsolable and gives itself to thinking about the bliss it has lost because of sin. For that reason he speedily betook himself to the grave of the elder and, fell on his face on it, filled the air with laments and bewailed his weak will and lack of courage. If Lord Ilarion had not lifted him up from there with appropriate words he would have ended there like that beast, the lion, at the grave of St Jerome. After Ilarion consoled him, he stood up and then immediately threw himself down at his feet and told him through tears: “Because I transgressed against the law and separated myself from the holy elder and his company, from this day in the name of God I will obey you as I obeyed him.” Knowing that he is his better in virtue, [Ilarion] refused and did not want to accept him. But the truly humble Roman confessed this to him: “I will not get up from the ground unless you accept me to serve you in the name of the Lord.” He saw his great humility and, knowing his perfection in obedience in the Lord, accepted him. One could see then how the

¹⁵⁹ After Phillipians 1:23.

great among the ascetes took on the obligations of a novice and rushed to every chore like a youth whose hair has just been cut.

While things were going this way, they heard that the desert of Paroria flourishes because Tsar Alexander directed his anger against the many robbers and murderers who were in the habit of harming the servants of God and intercessors for all the Christians, and threatened them that if they do not put a halt on such actions, he would go after them. Eager recipients and witnesses of such news, the said blessed men left Zagorie and returned to Paroria, their much desired desert, and to heremitic life. It was truly a place the sight of which moved deeply the virtuous and God-loving souls; there, nature has the capacity to elevate the mind to perception of God. Consider the Carmel of Elijah, the desert of John, and the mountain of Jesus: they all teach us that the desert and the heremitic life are good for us. Many solitaires live together in silence in such places. And so, speedily returning to Paroria, as I said, they built themselves a cell close to the foundation of Gregory the Sinaite and settled there.

At that time I, the wretched and useless among those of the same mind [as theirs] had arrived from the city of Constantine to that place. Realizing the virtue of their life and being, I bowed my head down and subjected myself to Lord Ilarion to whom the said blessed man had subjected himself as the account already mentioned. It is time, therefore, to narrate in good order and for the benefit of those reading this his courageous dignity, his accomplishments, and his strivings in the name of God.

The great and most honorable fast of Lent was about to begin and, according to the custom, on the evening of the Sunday called *siropustna*¹⁶⁰ those of one mind gather together and share their meal together with those who lead the solitary and isolated life, residing in solitude;¹⁶¹ this we did. While we sat on the table with the elder, he ordered us to spend the coming week in our cells, residing in solitude, and on the next Saturday, the [feast day of] St Theodore Tyron to come back and share another meal. We cooked some food for the consolation of our bodies, and did everything as advised and commanded by our tutor, Lord Ilarion. On the following Saturday, as we sat down at the table

¹⁶⁰ The seven-week long fast before Easter; during the first week monks did take almost no food.

¹⁶¹ The coenobitic monks and the hermits.

to have our lunch, the elder commanded me to serve what was necessary. The good Roman sat there too, but appeared to be somewhere else dreamy, and as if out of his mind, or in a trance; he did not even touch the delicious food. [Suddenly,] he jumped up, left the table, and rushed for his cell all in tears: the grace of the Passions did not allow him to be idle even for so long. We thought that he went out to follow the call of nature and expected him to come back. However, as more time passed that was necessary for this, the elder asked me to go and see what was going on. I looked around, but as I did not find the one I was seeking, I went to his cell. When I reached it, and here I swear before God that I am telling the truth, I heard him weeping and wailing like a woman who had buried her husband or the son of her own blood and flesh.¹⁶² Having received the benefit of the encounter with such bliss or, better, terrified of it, I did not dare knock and returned to the elder. When he saw me so worried and shaken up, he wanted to find out the reason for my anxiety and asked, “Where is the brother?” I had understood [what had happened] and told him: “Father, we are taking corporeal food here, while he is partaking of a spiritual meal.” The elder promptly asked me for clarification and I told him what I had heard with my ears. He was stunned and, after a while, [said]: “Go again and invite him [to join us] so that we can rejoice and dignify ourselves together.” I ran to the cell to fulfill the order of the elder and stopped right next to it, listening. Then again, by the undescrivable grace which You, Christ, grant to those who fear You, I heard weeping and crying which was even louder than before. Fulfilling the order of the elder, I knocked on the door and then he came out, the divine inspiration transpiring through his shining face, his cheeks wetted by the stream of abundant tears.

Since that moment the good weeper received, even though not fully, the bliss of tears. This grace and rich gift of the most Holy Spirit was granted [to him] on account of his deeds and his many accomplishments, his unconditional obedience as well as his long fast on that Sunday. He was granted the source of tears not only for silent weeping but for heart-breaking crying as well as the account already mentioned. But let us not digress and return to the narration.

¹⁶² The “gift of tears” was considered a great spiritual bliss by the hesychasts.

He dried his face with his hand and we returned to the elder. We sat at the table and the elder and I took of the food on it to strengthen our bodies a bit after the strict fast of the previous week. He abstained completely for, as it was said, he had been nourished not by bread but by the gift of tears and grace. Since then he convinced the elder to [allow him] to built a cell about a *poprishte* away, closer to the river where he could catch fish and bring it to the elder for he too, suffered from a weak stomach like the former elder. Residing there and enjoying, from the bottom of his soul, the solitude of the desert, which he sought and which he longed after, he added feat to the feat and gained tears to the tears. No one has poured out such streams of tears, conferring one on one with God, without interference, like this [man] moved by grace. For silence brings about tears as the divine fathers, above all the great expert of monasticism, John of the Ladder, taught us: he revealed that this baptizes the man and makes him sinless. Is it necessary to talk about the amount of grace he obtained through the constantly streaming tears and the spiritual consolation? My mind cannot conceive of it; my tongue cannot narrate about things that are mysterious and confined to secrecy. We cannot really reveal this in the account, but men versed in the heremitic life know what has been said about the temptation.

What next? Did he ever taste the fish that he caught while he resided there? Not at all. His was the perfect God-pleasing job: catch the fish and bring it to the elder for he was frail and his stomach weak. As for himself, he ate the customary food.

While we lived like in peace, the governor of the town of Skopelos informed us in a letter that the Muslims would come over to hunt. "Because of that you have to do one of two things: either enter the tower and stay there with the monks, or leave the place. I am giving you this advice for your benefit and safety." I cannot describe the grief that seized us when we received this sad news. Tears streamed down from our eyes for we anticipated the separation with our most beloved desert. Then, since it was impossible for us to cohabit with the monks in the tower due to our solitary way of life, we were forced to leave Paroria and migrate to Zagorie. There, in Monkre, we found our old cells and settled in them. Naturally, [we separated]: our elder Lord Ilarion and myself in one place, and the blessed and moved by grace Lord Roman in another, far from us. I think he arranged for this to perform the feat of weeping without interference because "solitude is

the mother of tears by the Word and the divine Mind” as John of the Ladder says,¹⁶³ as well as all those who, in word and mind, chose the life of the hermit in the name of God. It is no different in our days, and the blessed one who stands before us in this account testifies for it. Many times, when I went to seek him on the order of the elder for something we needed and stood before his cell, I heard him, as I mentioned before, crying and shedding tears as if he had just buried his dead [relatives].

The desert-lover spent some time with us. Then, all of a sudden, he was seized by the memory of Paroria, shook off the troubles of the mundane world, left Zagorie, and ran as fast as his feet could carry him. Disregarding the fear of the Muslims, he strove for Paroria. Because of the desert, he ignored bodily danger just like the martyrs ignore it to partake of the heavenly bliss. When he finally arrived there, he entered in the inner desert of the mountain and built himself a cell there. There he obtained the angelic image and renamed himself Romil.¹⁶⁴ He spent five years in that desert without any contact with humans; only in cases of extreme need did he go to the foundation of the father Sinaite.

Who is capable of describing the rivers of tears [he shed] through all these years, his battles with the devil, and the terrors which the servant of God suffered from the enemies while he spent his time in solitude and, one on one with the One God, offered Him prayers day and night, as he himself told us? The blessed one explained that none of those possessing a body can fight the demons except with the help of God. “In the beginning,” he told us, “when I entered the inner desert, the envious demons devised many fearful apparitions to scare me and drive me out of the desert. Sometimes they created lights, sometimes lightnings and thunders, or gave out deafening blasts similar to the movements of a ship. Occasionally they sighted and exclaimed in a manner similar to the striving and joining of the battle of the passions. Even the hills and the mountaintops of that place echoed with voices so that it appeared to me that the trees themselves emitted sounds. But I,” he said, “resisted them in the name of the Lord Christ and considered

¹⁶³ *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, ch. 7:17.

¹⁶⁴ Roman took the “great schima,” the ultimate degree of ascetism, and being thus “born again in the Lord” changed his monastic name.

their terrifying endeavors childrens' game. I prayed that I reach the end of my life there."

Contrary to reason, due to the unfathomable and mysterious decisions of God, the Creator of everything, it happened that that true home of the monks, including the most famous foundation of the great father Lord Gregory the Sinaite, was subjected to destruction and desolation; to be honest [the same happened] everywhere where they care about the Truth. Just like the governor of Skopelos had warned us, inspired by the Divine Providence, the Muslims who entered that mountain surrounded the tower many times, shot arrows at the monks, and purloined their best beasts of burden. [Finally,] when they were warned one more time, the monks left that place and dispersed, having first set fire to the tower to prevent the enemies of God from settling in it.

It was then, therefore, that the blessed servant of God about whom we are narrating now left that desert perforce and against his will and came back to Zagorie where he built a hut in a deserted place very far from the city [of Tarnov]. However, the common enemy of our salvation sowed envy against the blessed one in the hearts of the monks who resided there. Monastic and lay settlements in Zagorie are at a short distance from one another, and there is no empty desert there where a monk could settle. When he learned about their envy Romil, true disciple of the meek and humble [Gregory the Sinaite], left the place immediately and moved to the holy and divine mountain bearing that same name,¹⁶⁵ which had in various times revealed to the Almighty God many of His true servants. Quite openly he directed on the road of salvation many like-minded souls residing in this Holy Mount, above all those of his connationals. Yet, because many flocked to him—not solely from among those who led the life of hermits, but from among the monks and the others who live the communal life—for there was grace in his speech and he was quite skillful in the ascetic life since his youth and managed to attract to the road of salvation many of those who came to him with faith, he often became exhausted from the long conversations with those who came [to see him]. He, however, desired to live in silence and confer with God in privacy. For that reason he often moved from place to place to avoid noise and secular fame. He did not do it because of lazyness or fatigue as some who have no understanding of the matter would say. St John of the Ladder will confirm

¹⁶⁵ Mount Athos.

this account, for he said: “I saw the feat of those who stay in the same place, the patience of the monks. However, I envied more those who wandered for God.” And elsewhere: “The propertyless hermit is a high-flying eagle; he came grieving and left the place without grief.”¹⁶⁶ We have to understand that he conserved effortlessly his ability to wander for he had no ties to anything on earth.

Having changed his residence on Mount Athos many times, he finally came to a mountain in the vicinity of the holy Lavra, called Melana¹⁶⁷ since ancient times. Black as its name says it was, it was filled with the *praxis* of the mind’s light, as it became clear with time. At that time I, unworthy of residing with him that I was, came from Zagorie and found him building a cell for himself. I bowed down my head, as I was accustomed of doing for a long time, and bowed down my neck as well in the name of the Lord, and subjected myself to him. There was a great famine there in that time and a great scarcity of the most necessary things and he had to send someone here and there in Mount Athos to purchase what we needed. However, the elder did not yet have in Mount Athos the right of a share from the common purse, called here *adelphato*, for he had arrived only recently here and was unknown to many, not because he was unworthy but because he was quite skillful in the virtue [of humility]. Those whom he sent came back empty-handed, without success, and without what we needed. When I saw that he looked as if filled with shame and despair, I said: “Woe to me, the wretched one! In what time did I come to your blessedness! Not only are suffering on account of the scarcity, and they deprive themselves, but on top of all I am a burden to your holiness!” Having heard this, he replied angrily: “Woe to your lack of faith, oh wretched one, for I firmly believe that my Lord Jesus Christ will not leave us without His support and without those things that satisfy our bodily needs.” This is, therefore, how he, the unflinching pillar of the faith, exposed my weak faith. God responded to his faith, for he kept giving modest alms and disbursing to everyone whatever was needed, unburdened by the selfishness and the narrow-minded disposition of those who fall on hard times.

What faith conceived bore real fruit. A couple of days later he sent me to the monastery on some business with an acquaintance. I got there

¹⁶⁶ The *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 17:5, 7:2, 3, and 8.

¹⁶⁷ In Greek “black.”

and sat in the inn, waiting for the one I had been sent to see. There a leper came to me and told me the following: "As I see, you have come here, brother." When he heard from me the details, that I was with an elder in Melana, and about us, he said again: "Do you need any bread?" I, seeing that he was a poor leper, replied: "From where have you got bread, being poor and sick?" And he answered and told me: "I came here to beg one of my acquaintances for fresh bread for dry bread I have more than I need." I asked him about it, and he quickly went and came back and gave me a large sack full [of bread]. I took it and ran to the blessed one. He saw it, asked about it, learned that I have taken it from a poor leper, raised his arms to heaven and shouted: "Glory to Thee, our God, for showing us your mercy not through the wealthy, but through the poor, thus revealing the poverty of our souls!" Using this case as example, he instructed me in a fatherly manner and exposed my greed and the insufficiency of my faith. For the saint had a great faith in God and offered the bounty of alms to everyone; not only to people, but even to animals, beasts and birds as well.

Further: among his other deeds in the name of God, he did this as well. If some of the monks in that mountain wanted to build a cell where he could settle, and asked us for help, he would come according to the custom and request that he ordered me to go and help him. [He] would welcome him with joy and say: "Yes, holy father, tomorrow I will send him to help you." After that one had left, he would instruct me this way: "Prepare more food tonight for this and this father is building a cell and wants us to help him." I promptly did as he ordered. In the morning, therefore, we would take bread, wine, and the meal, as well as some of the food in the cell, that is, fruit and some sweets, and would go together to the father who had called on us trusting [that we would help]. One could then see the blessed one work together with the others till the evening as if he were a young man. Then, tired, we would return to our cell.

Besides all this, it is proper that the account reveals another God-pleasing deed, so that both God gets glorified through his close servants and those who have fear of him become more diligent in their good works. Once, the saint came into our common cell to eat bread with us, for otherwise each of us ate and sang by himself, except on appointed days, as is the custom among the hermits. At the same time, a monk from somewhere else came and began to chop down wood near the cell. I went up to him, and addressed him angrily and without restraint: "Who are you, brother, and how do you dare cut down threes here,

right next to our cell?” He, a stranger and a poor monk humbled by poverty, replied in a most meek voice: “Forgive me, father, for I am a foreigner, and I did not know that there was a cell here.” When the saint heard this, he told me: “Invite him in the cell.” When he came in, he ordered me to offer him food, which I did. Choosing most humble words, that true disciple of the humble and gentle Christ asked the poor man: “Where are you from, brother?” He answered: “I am from Trebisond and I just came to this holy mountain.” He [Romil] then inquired in detail about his circumstances. When he figured that he [the stranger] barely managed to earn his daily bread, he immediately told me: “Gregory, divide into equal parts whatever you have in your cell and give, for God’s sake, half of it to this poor brother.” I resisted, and thinking in worldly terms, told him: “Father, there are many of us here; we are in greater need than he is.” He quickly shot a stern look at me and said: “Do you not remember what I told you: if you have faith you will never be deprived of the things that you need.” But let me return to where I left and follow the proper order of the account.

When we finished our cell we settled down, busying ourselves with our customary preoccupations, because while we were building it we had interrupted our solitude and had lived together. We went back to our calm routine reassured by the successful completion of the job, but then a new commotion befell us; however, it was of the spiritual kind, the one that brings much benefit to the soul. For one could see then how the hermits in the Holy Mount gathered to drink the divine and efficacious speech that streamed from his mouth, like bees massing on a lush and dewy meadow. Just like the magnet stone attracts iron to itself, so his speech and his most sweet sermons [attracted] the souls of those who came to him. Those instructed by him ended up acquiring a benefit of great use. If some of them harbored trouble in their soul and experienced the joy of listening to his sermon they were immediately cured of it. I saw some of those who came to him, among them squalid, merciless, and exhausted people, or persons oppressed by others or attacked by demons, return back to where they came from with brightened faces, their souls rejoicing from the sweetness of his most delightful instruction.

For the benefit of the listener, let us offer some of his teachings in this account as well: “My brothers and fathers,” he used to say, “let us keep clean our conscience in regard to our neighbour and preserve our hearts pure from the polluting thoughts which habitually defile wretched souls. We cannot do that unless we fashion the soul’s naturally

given three components. Its three parts are called reason, wrath, and desire. The most wise and most gentle God created these things for the protection and refuge of the human soul, so that men adhere to their substance in a God-pleasing manner and spent their lives, and act modestly and free of vice, as our holy fathers preached in their God-inspired teachings. “Let wrath be directed solely against the serpent because of which you fell,” said the most blessed voice [of St John the Theologian]. Desire should be directed entirely to God and not to any of the deceiving kinds of learning; and reason should govern everything so that the better things do not succumb to the worse ones. As we arm ourselves with wrath against the enemies of reason, that is, against the demons and vices as this saintly man says and, above all, against all the powers that oppose the salvation of the soul, then, having preserved our substance, we will be able to love God from the bottom of our soul and our neighbour like ourselves, as the most holy Gospels teach us. However, when part of the reason goes against the substance, when we are seduced by earthly desires, such as lust, or glory, or avarice, we become angry with our brothers. This is the source of wrath, evil memory, unrestrained rage, slander, love of arguing, envy of the neighbour and, finally, the first fruit of envy: murder.

When we keep desire in line with our substance as it has been given to us by God, we desire the eternal goods which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard of and the man governed by vices and the flesh cannot fathom. On their account we suffer all kinds of bodily and spiritual pain while performing the good works, namely fast and vigils, selflessness, corporeal purity, incessant prayer or, to put it in a nutshell, while doing everything for the salvation of the soul, toiling day and night. We cannot do anything good unless it is through these things. For it is impossible, as St Maxim said, the most wise among the divines, to transform hatred except through control of the thoughts.¹⁶⁸ Thoughts, in their turn, are controlled through abstention of three kinds: abstention of sleep, of food, and of bodily comfort. However, when beastly desire is stirred up against nature, we are no longer the speech-endowed species, as the scripture says somewhere: “Man, although honored, did not understand it, came close to the mindless beasts, and became like them.” Because of this we desire earthly things subject to decay, food,

¹⁶⁸ St Maxim the Confessor in *Patrologia Graeca*, 90 col. 564–565.

glory, gold, silver and the pollution they engender. For that reason we get angry with [other] men, as it was said, remember evil, and sin all the time.

Because reason, in speech and thought, was made to reign over everything, if man preserves the grace given him by God in His image and likeness and always thinks about the good, focuses thoughtfully on singing [praises], prays with untroubled spirit and body, exercises sincerely, and his will acts according to the divine law day and night, it will be evident that he thinks solely about the good of every pious man. However, if [reason] strays from the good, what can be said about it? Indeed, what foolishness, garullity, slander, blasphemy, argument, anger, libel, and other sins will not sprout from such a thought or speech? Moreover, the man will be overwhelmed by a lack of sense but he will not realize it: he will think that he is sinless.

Hence those who possess the three components of the substance, as it was said, have preserved their conscience sound and sane. It will point out to them good and evil according to the primordial law of the substance as it had been given to men. It will advise them to keep to the good and not yield to the bad. Because of this we, who are endowed with reason and free will, are crowned for our good deeds and justly sentenced for the evil ones. The three parts [of the substance] determine how our response to the assault of the demons is handled. We only need to be ashamed to avoid being sentenced; but the reward from God comes only if we are virtuous, if we promptly cast off the diabolic temptations. However, if, after the first assault, we accept the seed of the enemy we affiliate ourselves with him; from affiliation we move to joint action, and from that to evil deeds, for which we are justly tried, as it was already said.”

He used to tell them this as well: “When you go to a friend’s cell and find the door open do not just barge in but first knock from the outside as it is proper. Enter only after the master of the cell has invited you; get in and sit down. Do not allow your eyes to investigate everything in the cell. Keep your head down and, with your eyes to the ground, inform the master of the house about the reason of your visit. If you see books there do not presume to pick them up and read them, regardless of whether the master of the house is there or not. This is bad manners and contrary to good conscience. For that reason never open [a book] but first ask the owner of the book. Open it only if he grants you permission. And if you want to distinguish yourself even

more than that, do not even ask to open it unless he allows you first. If your comrade entrusts you with a purse full of gold or silver, do not get tempted to open it and look inside. This too is bad manners. If something else has been given to you in any kind of container do not stick your hand inside for that would be foolish and impious. It harms the soul and incites to theft. If you happen to come across something on the road or in the monastery, or in some deserted place, which belongs to your neighbour, do not keep it; return it to the owner. If you do not do so, it will be counted as theft in the day of your death.”

Once my elder sent me to a father to get a book and fetch it to him. I went there, got the book, and turned back to our cell. After a while I got tired of walking, sat down to rest, opened the book and quickly found the chapter that the father wanted to read. I read it, closed the book, and took it to him. He took it and opened it, looking for that chapter, but could not find it. I told him: “Father, what chapter are you looking for?” When he told me, I figured that it was the chapter which I read on the road, and I said to him: “If you allow me, I will show it to you.” He answered: “Show me.” I took the book, found the chapter that he wanted to read, and showed it to him. He looked askance at me and asked: “How did you know that the chapter was in the book?” The question and the face of the father immediately made it clear to me that I had sinned. Now what? I fell at his feet, confessed what I had done and begged for forgiveness. He reprimanded me harshly, telling me: “Oh wretched one, how did you dare open my cell and my treasury and look at what is in there? Go away from me; I do not want a disciple who follows his own reason rather than my desires!” Only after I wallowed at his feet and begged forgiveness through tears he finally pardoned my offence but not without punishment; no, I got my punishment and appropriate penance as well.

This is how he took care of those serving him and brought various benefits to the obedient. This is how, through reasoning and practice, he guided spiritually and fashioned in purity not only his disciples and everything pertaining to them, but disciples of other fathers as well when they happened to send someone to him for correction, on account of their disobedience, arguing, or another vice. He would begin with these words: “My beloved brother, you have taken the apostolic road. Just like they revered our Lord and God Jesus Christ so we too are obliged to have reverence, each of us for our own elder, and completely deny our own will, as the Lord Himself taught us. I came down from Heaven, he said, to do not my will but the will of the Father who sent

me.¹⁶⁹ Taught by Him, the apostles neither objected, nor argued, nor guided themselves by their own will and intentions, but subjected themselves to the commandments and reason of their Teacher and heard Him say: “Where I am, there my servant will be.”¹⁷⁰ They did not get disappointed. I dare say myself: those among you who, applying their reason, suffer the trampling of their own will and who, wounded by the insults and reproaches of their teacher and elder, take them humbly and blame themselves without arguing and accusing him in anything, they will be crowned together with the holy apostles, rejoicing with Christ in the eternal ages.”

Let us tell another story that will benefit the soul. There was a certain father who resided down the road, about a *poprishte* away from us. He had fallen pray to the vice of anger, even though he was a very assiduous hermit. It was not a surprising thing. His disciple was extremely obedient and diligent in his service to the elder. However, the youth found it hard to stand his temper and many times wanted leave him. The elder, sensing that the brother entertained such thoughts, took him and came to the saint, for he had been granted power from God to strengthen and guide those tempted by the enemy of goodness. He talked to each of them in private and instructed and advised them accordingly. To the elder he said: “Father and brother in God, you have no right to punish the brother so harshly for the first offence; even in harshness you have to be gentle and meek,” and other things of the sort. His interlocutor listened and promised to follow the advice of the father. However, defeated by nature, he displayed again his rashness and harshness. To the youth Romil talked like the father and teacher in charity he did not have, using appropriate words: “Do not dare,” he told him, “leave the elder and subject yourself to an even greater temptation for those who forsake obedience are dragged into the devil’s lust. I think that in a short time either you or the elder will die and you will be set free from these torments. If you make it until the elder passes away you will be crowned together with the martyrs and will celebrate with the angels, rejoicing and cheering for all ages.” When he heard that, he went home comforted and vowed to stay with the elder, which he did.

¹⁶⁹ John 6:39.

¹⁷⁰ John 12:26.

But even here the wise and attentive listener will notice the workings of the divine ordinances. The young brother had been ordered by his elder to work in the monastery's bakery three days per week, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and bring back freshly baked bread to the elder. On the eve of Ash Wednesday we went as usual to help with the kneading. On Thursday morning he was ordered by the said elder to stay until the divine liturgy, take communion with the divine mysteries, and come back with bread as usual. The brother did as he was commanded. As soon as the divine liturgy was over and he took communion with the most pure mysteries he, as he normally did, went to the bakery to take the loaves of bread. But at the moment he requested them, he was suddenly seized by a fiery fever and immediately passed away. The fathers in that foundation took care of the body and soon buried him with honor. The elder, when he heard about his quick and unexpected death, grieved in his heart, as it was proper. He added tears to the tears and wailing to the wailing, not ceasing until his own death. In this, he was the tutor of St Akakius: "Forgive me, brothers, for I committed murder."¹⁷¹ In my opinion, this happened not by accident or unhappy circumstance as some would say, but in accordance with the divine will, as a product of the unfathomable divine providence, to ensure salvation for both of them. For the brother went to the Lord immediately after he partook of the divine mysteries on that terrifying and foretelling day and, because the elder did not cease to grieve until his death even his grave emitted a sweet odor.

I do think that this is an appropriate story that shows to the listener the benefit and fruitfulness of the words and testaments of the saint. But let our account return to him and everything about him in an orderly manner so that we reach the end of the tale. I composed this narration, as I already said, for the greater glory of God and for the benefit of the reader.

Many monks came to him who wanted to enjoy his sermons. However, they disturbed him for they interrupted his customary spiritual service to the Rule and his spiritual ruptures. He was saddened and indignant and his soul filled with trouble and grief. Once he told me in private: "Brother, go toward the northern slopes of Mount Athos, seek carefully and find me a level place where I can build a dwelling for myself, so that, in a quiet and private place, I can have a rest from the

¹⁷¹ The *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, ch. 4:110.

noise of those who come to me. You can see for yourself that people do not let me neither rest nor practice.” I went and found a good place for the building of a cell. I also found a rock near which there was a spring gushing forth most sweet water. Together with a couple of brothers skillful in such things we promptly went there and quickly built a cell. The saint settled in it and conferred with God in private; this is how he got a short break from noisy multitudes and sermons. However, the people soon found out where he dwelled for, as the voice of the Lord and the Master says, “A town that stands on a hill cannot be hidden.”¹⁷² This mountain is the height of virtue; those who climb it shine like the light. And they kept coming to him as they did earlier and for him came true the word that said: “As much as some try to escape human glory it always catches up with them.”

When, some time later, the death of the most Christian Despot Uglesha came to pass¹⁷³ all of the monks living in that holy mountain and above all those who resided in hermitages and in silence were seized by fear and anxiety. Many of the hermits fled the holy mountain. The saint, urged by them, departed from the holy mountain, his beloved desert, and moved to another place, unknown and unrevealed, exactly according to his taste and desire. The place was called by the locals Avlon.¹⁷⁴ Even here, however, his intentions were thwarted. The more he wanted to hide the light of his divine life under the lid of modesty the more God placed him openly on the candlestick. For He said: “Your light will shine among men so that men see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.” Then the saint settled in the desert called Avlon, wishing to nourish the fruits of virtue through most holy life in silence and solitary living. The righteous man was accustomed to solitude and unassuming life. He built a small cell and there he dwelled and sent out to God devout prayers and supplications. However, when the monks who fled the holy mountain for fear of the foreigners¹⁷⁵ heard about that, they were incited by the desire to join the venerable and came to reside with him, if possible, and enjoy the benefit of his virtue. He did not want that and, after welcoming them and teaching and instructing them in virtue and fear of God, sent them back. When lay noblemen heard of him they too came to the

¹⁷² Matthew 5:14.

¹⁷³ At the battle of Chernomen in 1371.

¹⁷⁴ Valona, now Vljoia in Albania.

¹⁷⁵ The Ottoman Turks.

blessed man seeking his blessing, bringing him choice fruit, bread, and other things necessary for the body. The saint told them: "Children, it is not meet for us to partake of that; we are content with ragged clothes and for food, greens with salt." Nevertheless, he blessed them and after guiding them toward the wisdom of virtuous life, sent them back to their homes.

The blessed man realized that even there he would not be able to hide the treasure of virtue, and because he could not stand such things any longer, spent his nights in prayers, addressing God with thankful words and saying: "Thank You, God, for I have been bound by my enemy who did not leave me alone even in this forsaken desert but designed ruses against me and spread my fame. I beg of You, Lord and Healer of souls, deliver me from his tricks and grant me and my fathers solitary living." While the blessed one thought this in his soul and prayed to be able to flee that desert and if possible, find refuge in another secluded place, he fell asleep. A divine vision appeared to him, which told him: "Leave Avlon and go to another place to which God will guide you, but not in the holy mountain." He took the advice of the divine vision, left Avlon together with his disciples and moved to the land of Serbia, to the place called Ravanica, where there is a foundation dedicated to the feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. He built a dwelling nearby. There he spent a considerable amount of time and from there he exited the earthly dwellings and migrated into the eternal ones, handing his soul over in the hands of God. His grave emits a strong fragrance.

I, the wretched and unworthy of the name of his disciple wrote everything about his life and his salvific and God-pleasing deeds from the beginning of his denial of the vain world until his departure from the holy mountain, as best I could, for the benefit of the reader. As for what happened after his blessed assumption, [ask] the trustworthy men loved by God who happened to be there and be witnesses and spectators. As they saw and explained, God gave him the power to exorcise demons, cast snakes out of people's innards, cure the lame, give sight to the blind and, to put it briefly, heal any kind of affliction and sooth the pain of any illness through the grace and daring granted him by God, whom he had pleased while among the living according to his powers. This is how God glorifies those who serve and praise Him from the bottom of their soul.

Oh, father of fathers, light of the hermits, teacher of the monks, diligent disciple of the desert, peak of silence, most loud laborer of

weeping, beholder of the divine mysteries, sole worker of miracles, pray incessantly, servant and close friend of God that you are, for the peace and prosperity of the pious tsars, for all Christian people, for your entire flock, for the foundation where your honorable body lies, and for all those who dwell in it and serve your divine casket.

I beg you to pray for me, your unworthy servant as well. I praised you, the one worthy of angelic praise, not very skillfully but diligently. Accept with grace the praise that my humble mind devised so that through your prayer we get absolved from our former sins, receive the heavenly gift, and inherit the Kingdom of Heaven together with all the saints on account of Christ, Jesus our Lord, to whom is fitting to give glory, honor, and worship, together with the Father without beginning and His most Holy, gentle, and Life-giving Spirit, now, forever, and for all ages, amen!

Patriarch Euthymius, Panegyric of St John of Polyvlot (excerpts).

144

St John of Polyvlot lived in the eighth century and was bishop of Polyvlot in Byzantine Thrace and an active iconodule. He died ca. AD 730 and was officially canonized soon after the council of 843, which restored the veneration of the icons. His short Byzantine Greek *Life* was translated into Bulgarian some time before the end of the thirteenth century for the needs of his cult, established in Bulgaria after Tsar Kaloyan transported his relics to Tarnov in 1205. Euthymius' work stresses a crucial point of the early *Life*: the secular powers, unlike the Church, are not immune from mistakes in sacred matters. The only true guidance against heresy, therefore, is that of the Church. This injunction rang a relevant tone for the patriarch, who defended a similar position about the leading role of the Church in another of his works, the *Life of St John of Rila*. Edition: Kałużniacki, *Werke*, 181–202.

Many years later, under the pious Tsar Kaloyan, the power of the Bulgarian people grew and the entire land of the Greeks obeyed his hand. However, since the Frankish people had then taken Constantinople and the entire power of the Greeks, they made tsar [one] of their kin. When the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan found out that the latter had come to Adrianopolis he speedily arrived at Plovdiv and took it over with a clever trick. Then he sent soldiers to loot in the direction of Adrianopolis, and hid the better part of the army in certain places. The tsar that the Franks chose, called Baldwin, without suspecting the ruse, with those who were around him in that moment, gave them the chase. They pretended to flee until they brought him to the army. All of a sudden, the Bulgarians converged [upon him], captured him and led him to Tarnov where they put him to death. Then, at that same time,

the most glorious Kaloyan, tsar of the Bulgarians, armed himself in a manly manner against the Greek power and looted and devastated all of their cities and conquered their territory even to Drach. He ruled not only over the lands of his natural brother, the old Asen, but over a much larger territory, in the year 6712 [1204]. In the same time he found there the relics of the holy and blessed John and transported them with honor from the city of Messina to his glorious city of Tarnov. After him Boril reigned, and after that the tsardom came to Ioan Asen, the son of the old Tsar Ioan Asen, who established completely the Orthodox faith. Just as zealous was his faithful tsarina Ana, a new Theodora in the affairs of faith. She had many churches for the glory of God and his saints. To this, she built many honorable foundations for monks and nuns, in which they reside to this day, offering to God incessant praise day and night. She also founded a monastery for monks dedicated to the holy and most praised high apostles and in it she placed the most honorable relics of the blessed John, who grants various cures to all those who come to him with faith.

145 *Patriarch Euthymius, Life of St Petka-Paraskeve (excerpts).*

The *Life of St Petka* is Euthymius' most poetic work and a sample of the best prose of late medieval Bulgaria. It was composed at the request of Tsar Ioan Shishman (1371–1395), most likely during the latter part of his reign when the tsar badly needed help against the Ottomans and sought to enlist the supernatural assistance of the saint. The *Life* was extremely popular and served as prototype for numerous later Bulgarian, Russian, Roumanian, and Greek works dedicated to Paraskeve. The excerpt translated here cannot do justice to the beauty of Euthymius' Old Bulgarian style, his "weaving of wreaths of words." It does, however, illustrate the patriarch's interest in and knowledge of the history of thirteenth-century Bulgaria at the peak of its power under Ioan Asen II (1218–1241), as well as his conviction in the crucial importance of the Orthodox faith for the destiny of the Bulgarian state and people. Edition: Kałużniacki, *Werke*, 69–70.

In that time the pious Bulgarian Tsar Ioan Asen, son of the old Tsar Asen, strongly and solemnly supported the orthodoxy.¹⁷⁶ He was not scared the least bit from their [the Latins'] barking. Moreover, when he found a propitious time, he rose against the rule of the iniquitous and conquered the entire region of Macedonia, as well as Ser along with the mountain of Athos, or better said the Holy Mountain; apart

¹⁷⁶ Ioan Asen II (1218–1241).

from that, the glorious Thessaloniki with the whole of Thessaly, and Tribalia, as well as Dalmatia, which is also called the Albanian country, all the way to Dyrrachium.¹⁷⁷ In these lands he solemnly and piously installed metropolitans and bishops as is witnessed by the honorable face of the golden bulls of the tsar in the glorious Lavra and the Protate of the Holy Mountain [of Athos].¹⁷⁸ However, he was not satisfied with this, but staunchly and manly conquered and subjugated everything even to the imperial city [of Constantinople]; he even devastated and subjugated the imperial city itself and imposed his power on the Franks who ruled there.¹⁷⁹

As he went on conquering and subjugating everything, the glory of the venerable reached him. He learned about her and his heart was fired up with great joy. Like a deer longing for water springs he longed to enjoy the imperishable treasure of the honorable casket with the holy relics of the venerable because she had shined everywhere with her miracles, spread virtuous rays everywhere, and illuminated every corner of the earth. Finding a propitious time, the pious tsar came up with a good and God-pleasing plan, useful and worthy of praise. He promptly sent to the Franks who were in Constantinople: he wanted neither silver, nor gold, nor pearls, nor precious stones, but the glorious casket of the venerable. Because, what would have been more precious to him than the body of the venerable? One thought was always on his mind: “If they ask for half of my tsardom, I am ready to hand it over; land, gold, silver, pearls, or precious stones—I will gladly give anything, I will forsake everything if only I were able to obtain the treasure that I covet!”

Having heard this, the Franks immediately obliged him. With all the speed and haste they obeyed him on this matter as they did in anything else and arranged that he received what he wished for. In a sign of their obedience they sent him many other things as well, promising

¹⁷⁷ Euthymius refers to territories included in Bulgaria after victory over Theodore Dukas Angelos Comnenos at the battle of Klokotnitsa in 1230, not lands taken from the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

¹⁷⁸ Of these only the charter to Vatopedi is preserved. The Protate was the governing council of the monastic republic of Mount Athos. After 1235, when the union with Rome was abolished, Ioan Asen II deposed the “uncanonical” church prelates and installed new bishops and metropolitans, promoted under the rules of Eastern Orthodoxy.

¹⁷⁹ Euthymius echoes the spurious claim of the *Prologue Life* of St Petka that Ioan Asen II received tribute from the Latin Empire. The unsuccessful siege of Constantinople took place in the winter of 1235–1236.

even more and asserting that they were to give up even their souls if that were possible. The autocrat, hearing this, felt as if he soared in the sky and could not sit still for great joy. Immediately, he sent with all solemnity the most holy Mark, the metropolitan of Great Preslav, to transport the body of the venerable from Epivat to the glorious city of Tarnov.¹⁸⁰ The latter went there with great zeal, rendered the appropriate honors [to the relics], took them, and with a solemn procession set out [for his land] with even greater zeal, offering tanks to God and the venerable.

As soon as he left the lands of the Franks and entered his own land every one far and near flocked with candles, burning lamps, and finely scented oils and accompanied the casket of the venerable all the way to the glorious royal city of Tarnov. When the pious Tsar Ioan Asen learned about this, he went out with his mother, Tsarina Elena, his Tsarina Ana, and all of his magnates. With them was the most honorable patriarch Lord Basil and the entire ecclesiastical establishment; an uncountable multitude of people went out as well. The tsar and those who accompanied him walked on foot four *poprista* from the city to mark the solemnity of the reception of the venerable. Taking her respectfully in their hands they kissed her with love that stemmed from the bottom of their hearts and souls. They brought her in and laid her to rest in the tsars' church¹⁸¹ where she lies to this very day and grants cures to all those who come with faith and love to her glorious casket.

I am at a loss to offer something worthy of her, for any thing that is worthy of this world is unworthy of her. Still, even though not quite worthy, I will announce what is necessary for her reception. I was not ready back then, venerable mother, to offer you welcome, but I will now say what was appropriate to offer back then. Like a child-loving mother you will sweetly accept even the least gift as a worthy one. But what would be the proper gift that I can offer you, oh honest Paraskeve? You are greater than any earthly gift. I did not attend the welcome back then, but I do gaze at you now like the most precious treasure and I tell you from the bottom of my heart, as if you were alive, what I would have told you then.

¹⁸⁰ The historical account of the *translatio* of St Petka's relics mentions that they were kept in Kalikratia.

¹⁸¹ The church of the Forty Martyrs.

Welcome, oh beautiful bride of Christ, pure dove, gilded by the Holy Spirit, virgin praise, dweller of the desert, interlocutor of angels, virtuous paradise, and splendid home of purity! God loved your beauty and adorned you with various miracles on earth while your spirit dwells in the heavens with the heavenly armies. Angels praise you and humans glorify you: they loved you maiden, and reveled in the sweet smell of your chrism. You are the honest bride of the true Groom. You are the flower blossoming in the middle of thorns. Human generations bless you for you followed your Spouse. You intercede for those in trouble and you are haven for those caught up in storms. Your casket pours out virtuous streams and drives away the demonic hordes. Your church cures afflictions, gives sight to the blind, and cleanses the leprous. That is why I bless you Petka, and your body, the sacred vessel. I bless your honest limbs. I bless your eloquent tongue for it never ceased to praise God. I bless your eyes for they did not succumb to naps that lead to death. I bless your hands, which performed labors and did not become idle. I bless your feet for they were not weakened by all-night vigils. You are vessel filled with the true chrism, the Holy Spirit. You are the zealous defender of all those who come to the casket of your relics.

Because of this your glory shines year-long and your miracles illuminated, like a lightning, the entire earth. Tsars dressed you richly, kissed you devoutly, and shed rivers of tears for the absolution of their sins. You are the sweet joy of high priests and the adornment of priests. Because of that they take you in their hands and bring you in the unapproachable Holy of Holies. It is the work of the Divine Wisdom I believe that after death your venerable body enters unapproachable [places]. You are the beauty, the intercessor, and the defender of the Bulgarians. Our tsars achieve greatness with you. Through your intercession we repulse all those who wage wars against us. Through you our city is strengthened and becomes victorious. Many times all kinds of strong tsars and barbarians wished to destroy your glorious city of Tarnov where your body rests, and raze it to ground without trace. However, through the power given to you by your Spouse Christ, like a bold commander you drove them away in shame. Everyone around you brings you the gift of their devotion. A council of queens gathers around your casket and stands still in devotion for you are a queen too even though not an earthly one: you are the chosen Tsarina of the Tsar of Heaven. You are the glory of the women, the beauty of the virgins, the example of apostolic life, the approval of the desert-dwellers, the defender of the young, the guardian of the married, and to every one

you provide what they want. You have the ability to work miracles, you give abundantly and without envy what every one needs.

146 *Patriarch Euthymius* Life of St John of Rila, *second half of fourteenth century (excerpts)*.

The corpus of *Lives* of St John of Rila was further enriched in the process of the great reform of Bulgarian literature and grammar in the fourteenth century. Drawing on the earlier tradition, Patriarch Euthymius employed the best style and vocabulary the Bulgarian language of the time offered to weave a “wreath of words” as his personal tribute to the saint. St John emerges from the *Life* much more integrated in the ecclesiastical establishment and a perfect hesychast who experiences the mystic enlightenment of silent contemplation, a spiritual teacher of the lords of men rather than a detached hermit, and an active, accomplished career cleric and shepherd of his flock, free from the peasant uncouthness characteristic of earlier *Lives*. He forcefully asserts the primacy of the church and demands that the state acknowledges it. This was by far the most popular of Patriarch Euthymius’ *Lives* of Bulgarian saints. It is extant in two versions, both dating back to Euthymius’ time. Edition: Kałużniacki, *Werke*. Other translations: *MB*, 239–260.

The parents of the venerable were pious in everything. They were Bulgarians by origin, born and raised in the village called Skrino, in the province of Sredets. This city of Sredets is one of the famous and prominent cities in Europe.

Residing in this village, living the pious life, and being of a generous disposition, they gave birth to two children, one of whom is this marvelous John. He was well brought up by his parents. He obeyed them in everything and paid them due respect. After a long time, his parents passed away and he continued to live in fear of God. He never missed going to church, paid due attention to the holy instruction of the divine sermons, and sweetly pleased God through fast and prayer. He was full with love of God. Like a seraph he burned spiritually for the Lord his God, and bore a hundred-fold fruit like a three planted near a water spring. However, some people, seized by envy and lazy when it came to virtue, heaped scoldings and reprimands upon him. They called him a hypocrite, totally useless for secular life. . . .

Having stayed there for a short while to train himself he [left] what is earthly to those of the earth and the soil to those who will turn into ashes. He left behind the world and those who rule in it and set out for the mountain to which he was directed, taking nothing with himself but the leather shirt on his back. There he built a small hut of three branches and settled in it, torturing his body with fasts and vigils.

After a long time passed he moved to another place, where he found a dark and gloomy cave. He settled in it, adding labor to the labor and striving to the striving. Like a working bee he made honey-combs and piled them in the treasury of his heart. As he was living his days in this manner, the son of his brother hid himself from his father and mother and went to the desert where the blessed man resided. He barely found him, and only with great difficulty. Seeing him from afar, the venerable first thought that he was a phantom and began to pray. When he [the boy] came before him, he threw himself on the ground and asked for a blessing. As soon as he was reassured that it was indeed him and not a demon, he gave him his blessing and inquired about the reason of his arrival. Then, having told the venerable man everything about himself, he was accepted by him. His name was Luke. Watching him living with him like a growing cedar in the Lebanon, the venerable offered thankful hymns to God...

He lived for twelve years in that cave, never giving rest to his body. He constantly added labor to the labor and suffering to the suffering. Having seen this, the devil did not stop to grieve him in any way possible—some time through fatigue, some time through laziness, some time through threats, and very often through apparitions...

Some of the Christ-lovers desired to appear before the saint and receive his blessing. Seeing them setting out, a man who for many years was much afflicted by an unclean spirit went after them for he very much wished to cast off his disease. When he was about a *poprishte* away from the saint, the evil spirit shook him up violently. He fell on the ground and began to roll over, crying and shouting: "I burn in fire; I cannot walk any further!" They tied him up and dragged him along with great difficulty. Throwing themselves on the ground, they asked John to bless them. He fulfilled their request and asked them why they had come...

As he performed such deeds, the rumor about him, as it was said above, spread about. Even the tsar heard about him and desired [to see him]. Then the pious Tsar Peter held the scepter of the Bulgarian tsardom. He came to Sredets and, having learned about the saint, sent nine men, very skillfull hunters, to find the saint. He ordered them not to come back until they had found him. When they received the tsar's order, they reached Rila faster than one can say it. There they spent many days, wandering in vain and without finding anything. Weakened by hunger, they wondered what to do: they did not dare go back to the tsar but could not continue to wander further, famished as they were.

Fear prevailed, however, and they continued their search. Somewhat later, they came across a narrow path. It took them to the dwelling of the venerable and they asked for his blessing. He gave them his blessing and asked why they had come. They told him everything. With his spiritual eye he saw that they had not had anything to eat for five days, and he whole-heartedly offered them to share his table. The One who once fed five thousand with five loaves now fed nine men with one loaf of bread. Oh miracle! Back then they ate, and there were leftovers, and now too, half of the loaf remained! They saw that and marveled and on their return told the tsar everything.

The tsar, fired up by [divine] zeal and [feeling] as if in a cloud of joy, rushed like a deer to water sources during harvest time. Taking his boon companions along, he set out for the mountain in haste. As they reached the river called Rila, they came up to a great rock that was high, steep, and rather difficult to climb. Unable to proceed any farther, they turned back and climbed another high mountain, called Knishava by the people who live there. From there they showed the tsar the height and the rock where the venerable performed his deeds. However, the tsar was unable to reach it, for the slope was too steep and the place impossible to go through. Because of that he resorted to sending two young men, whom he loved much, to call on the saint and beg him to grant him his blessing [and tell him that] he had a warm desire to see him. As soon as they got the tsar's orders, they made haste to go to the saint and informed him [of the tsar's wish]. He, however, told them this was not possible. Still, he said to them: "Children, tell the tsar: Your toil and your request ascended to God like the sweet odor of a burning oil lamp and God accepted them. But you should quickly leave the place where you are for the [ground] there is unstable and you and those with you may be harmed. In this age you will not see our humbleness, this will only happen in the next age. If we only take from here the fruit of penitence, we will see each other rather well and will partake together of the undescribable joy."

The tsar was much grieved. Thinking that he had lost something great he left, feeling very sad and depressed. Returning to his palace and still wishing his blessing, he sent him a good quantity of gold and some fruit appropriate for a monk. He sent a letter as well, with the following content: "To the most honorable desert-dweller father John, from Tsar Peter. I heard of you soul's God-loving character, of your dwelling in the desert, and of your immaterial and angelic life, as well as that you have abandoned the world completely. I very much wanted to see you,

oh venerable man, and enjoy your honey-sweet speech, thinking that I would benefit greatly from being in your presence. But our desire for wealth and vainglory as well as our passions did not allow us, who are deep in the sea of this vain life, to ascend to the light of the pure and immaterial life, for our bodily eyes were darkened by secular cares and worries. Now, as I woke up as if from a deep slumber, I wished to see you, the saint. However, that grace was denied to me, the wretched one, on account of my many sins. I beg you and I prostrate myself before you, the venerable man, to send us consolation and cool the hot ambers of our grief. For you know, oh venerable one, you know all too well how much the storms of the secular world accustom the hearts of tsars to turbulence.”

The venerable John overcame his hesitance and bent before the request and the monastic food, though not before the gold, and answered in this manner: “To the pious Tsar Peter, the autocrat of the Bulgarian scepter, from the poor John. It is not meet for us to fulfill your entire request. However, on account of your faith and your diligence we fulfill what befits us: I accept the monastic food. The gold you keep yourself. Such things bring much harm to monks, especially those who reside in deserted and desolate places. Moreover, of what use would it be for those who don’t even eat bread to satiate themselves and drink no water to quench their thirst? For us Christ is life and death is the reward. You and your state have need of such things. Yet even you, the one wearing the crown, should not enjoy them, for it is said: “If wealth multiplies, do not get your heart attached to it.” It is, indeed, written that “Wealth is the strength of the tsar;” but it should be spent not for personal pleasure, but for weapons and armies and, above all, for the poor and the destitute, the naked and the homeless. If you wish to inherit the heavenly kingdom along with the earthly one, be as generous as our heavenly Father. Do not stake your hopes on injustice and do not desire to despoil others. Be meek, quiet, and well-mannered toward every one. Your eyes should look toward all! The stream of your mercy should pour over every one. Your left hand should not know what your right hand is doing. The poor should leave your palace rejoicing, and the princes should utter only praises of you with their tongues. Your red-colored mantle should shine with the brightness of virtue. Let sighs and tears be your children. Let the remembrance of death visit your mind often and let your thought always strive for the future tsardom. Prostrate yourself at the feet of your mother the church! Kneel down and bend your neck before those sitting on its high throne so that when

the Tsar of tsars and Lord of lords sees your diligence He will grant you goods that the eye has not seen, the ear has not heard of, man has not heard of, but God has prepared for those who love Him!”

As the tsar read this, he thought that he had received a great thing. He kissed it with respect and wore it on his body as if it were a most precious treasure. Often, as he [re-]read it, he drove away the darkness of secular habits.

The venerable John spent seven years and four months in that place. Not even for a moment did he give in to laziness or desperation. On the contrary, he added zeal to the zeal and assiduousness to the assiduousness or, to put it simply, in his old age he demonstrated a young man’s industry. Many went to him, bringing their sick along and came back with them healed through his prayers. His formidable fame spread all over the province and many more desired to live his virtuous life and wished to dwell with him. They built a church in the nearby cave, founded a monastery, and made the venerable man their master and shepherd. He grazed his flock well and brought many back to God. Performing great and glorious miracles, he lived to see many years. . . .

Then he said: “Lord, I am yielding up my spirit into Thee hands”¹⁸² and immediately rendered his spirit in God’s hands. He lived almost seventy years and was buried there by his disciples.¹⁸³

After some time, a strong and sweet scent began to emit [from his grave]. They opened the casket and saw that the body of the venerable was still whole and completely impervious to decay. It emitted a sweet odor that urged every one to divine zeal. They performed the customary praise-singing and solemnly transported his honorable relics to the glorious city of Sredec. There they laid them to rest in the church of the holy evangelist Luke. Later, a church was built in his name and his honorable relics were moved in it, performing marvelous and most glorious miracles.

Long time after that, in the reign of the Greek Tsar Lord Andronik¹⁸⁴ the Hungarian soldiers together with their king crossed the river Danube, conquered the Greek land even to Sredets and subjugated everything under their feet. They took the relics of the venerable and carried

¹⁸² Christ’s last words on the cross, Luke 23:46.

¹⁸³ The traditional date of John’s death is August 18, 946.

¹⁸⁴ Andronikos I Palaeologos (1183–1185).

them to their own land. Because the king had heard of the marvelous and great miracles of the venerable man, he ordered them to place his honorable relics in the church of the city called Ostrogon [Estergom]. There they performed most glorious and marvelous miracles, driving out infirmities and diseases. . . .

As [the people] saw and heard this, everyone's faith and affection to the saint grew. He performed many other marvelous and terrifying miracles in the Hungarian land as well but we have no time to account for them in detail. When the king learned about them he was seized by fear and terror. He adorned the casket of the venerable with gold and silver, kissed diligently his relics, and with great honor returned them back to Sredets, where there were laid to rest in the church built in his name, in the year 6695 [1187], fifth *indiction*.

Many years later, when by God's will the Bulgarian state, which had been destroyed by the violence of the Greeks, was restored or, to use the words of the scripture, the fallen tent was raised up again, God willed to increase the power of the Bulgarian tsardom under the most pious Tsar Asen, called in the holy baptism Ioan. As he took over the tsar's scepter, he strengthened well all Bulgarian strongholds which had been fallen [in disrepair] and renewed those that had been destroyed. He hurled himself mightily on the Greek tsardom and conquered its territories, cities, and villages. When he reached Sredets, he put it under his power as well. Then, as soon as he heard of the countless and most glorious miracles of the venerable, he set out for his holy church. As he kissed respectfully the venerable relics of the saint, he thought that he had found a priceless treasury. Filled with great joy and satisfaction of the soul, he made the good decision to transport the relics of the venerable to his most glorious city of Tarnov, to glorify and strengthen his tsardom even more. He, therefore, promptly sent a letter to his patriarch, Lord Basil, who resided in the great city of Tarnov, saying this: "To the most honorable high priest of God and spiritual father of our stately tsardom, Lord Basil. By God's will I came to these places and reached to the city of Sredets. Here I discovered the honorable relics of the venerable father John, the dweller of the desert of Rila, full of miracles and cures, and I was filled by such a great joy that I thought that I was flying in the air. His formidable glory has spread all over this land and the marvelous and most glorious healings that he performs are known not only here but in the entire Hungarian land as well. Given all this, the mind of our stately tsardom decided that your holiness should come here with the entire ecclesiastical order and with

appropriate solemnity transport the honorable relics of the venerable father to our most glorious royal city for the benefit of the ecclesiastical establishment and the strengthening of our pious tsardom.”

As the divine light heard this, he rejoiced spiritually, offered thankful prayers to God, and promptly gathered the ecclesiastical ranks to tell them all that was said above. With warm diligence and zealous souls they listened with pleasure and all of them unanimously set out as if they were about to seize a precious treasure. Led by their patriarch and teacher, they quickly came to Sredets. The pious Tsar Asen, having prepared everything well for the transportation of the saint, charged the patriarch [with the arrangements] and left with him three hundred brave soldiers to accompany the saint. He himself went ahead and speedily reached his royal city where he [had] a church in the name of the saint built in the most glorious city of Trapesitsa. The patriarch, for his part, took the honorable relics of the venerable and set out solemnly together with all the ecclesiastical ranks, rejoicing and praising God. Behind them went the abbot of the venerable’s foundation together with all the monks under his power.

When the tsar learned that the patriarch was near, he hastened to meet him, together with his council, in the place called Krastets.¹⁸⁵ He kissed the relics of the saint with respect and left them there for seven days until the church was ready. As soon as it was consecrated, they solemnly moved the relics of the saint into it, in the year 6703 [1195], thirteenth *indiction*. They rest there to this very day, performing various cures to all who come to them with faith. The blind who come in faith come to see again; lame get straightened up; mute people get to speak eloquently; the weak get strengthened; those afflicted with evil spirits get healed; and all those who come, no matter what is afflicting them, get cured.

147 *Ioasaph Bdinski*, Panegyric of St Philothea, *late fourteenth century*.

Not much is known about Iosaph (Joseph), except that he hailed from Vidin and around 1392 became a metropolitan bishop there. After the fall of Tarnov, in 1394, on the request of Tsar Ioan Sratsimir (1356–1396), then vassal of both Ottomans and Hungarians, he went to Tarnov to transport the relics of St Philothea to Vidin. He wrote the panegyric to celebrate the saint, hoping that she

¹⁸⁵ The short (Prologue) *Lives* call the place Okop (i.e., ditch or moat); Krastets means “the cross’ place,” now a small village and a railway stop in the mountain on the way to Tarnovo from southern Bulgaria.

would be capable of preventing the Ottoman conquest of Srazimir's tsardom, whose turn came not long after the disaster of the crusade of Nicopolis, most likely in the second half of 1397. His first-hand account of the conditions in the former Bulgarian capital focuses on the danger that the conquest posed for the Orthodox faith through the appropriation of churches, the dispersion of the clergy, and the conversion to Islam of some of the local leaders who sought to preserve their social status. The *Life* is strongly influenced by the writings of Patriarch Euthymius, from whom Joseph borrowed wholesale in style, organization, and vocabulary. Edition: Kałużniacki, *Aus der panegyrischen Literatur der Südslaven*, 97–115.

Now our mouths are full with joy; our tongues rejoice, to use the prophet's utterance. Today, as your bright triumph shines, divine rays enlighten us, who come to offer you our praise, the best we can, and edify all those who celebrate with love. Come diligently, therefore! Come closer with your hearts on fire; let us strive to be one with the light! For the cause of our celebration is not only illuminated with the rays of the hermitage; through the teaching of the apostolic gift she offers the beauty of greatness to us. This is why we, dedicated to great diligence, will now prepare to accept the abundance of her secret gifts. . . .

When the great Tsar Kaloyan took the Bulgarian tsardom he conquered the entire Greek land. When he reached that city [Molivot] he took it, and after he acquired the relics of the saint, he had them transported to his city [Tarnov]. When he heard about this, the patriarch, the clergy, the royal council, and all the people went out to meet her with candles and aromatic incense burners. They kissed the casket of the blessed and ceremoniously laid it down in the most famous temple of the most pure Mother of God in the royal city of Tarnov.

Long time after that, in 6902 [1394], third *indiction*, when, on account of the inscrutable divine secrets the wrath of the great invasion of the Agarenes was poured against that place [Tarnov]—alas!—occurred the complete devastation of that place and its environs. Through the stroke of the Almighty Wisdom, whose depths of fate are unfathomable, to it was applied, I cannot figure out how, the [prophecy] of the psalm of Jeremiah: “The routes of Sion are saddened” when every age of males fell under the blade; when that terrible miracle happened, which Jeremiah, again, sings about: “They shed their blood like water around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them; they left the corpses of [Thee] servants for the birds of the sky to feed upon and the bodies Thou blessed to the beasts of the earth.” And again: “A voice is heard in Ramla, Rachel cries about her children and cannot be consoled for they are no more.” These prophecies were were uttered back then, and

came to pass now: “And forsook the dwelling in Silom, the tent in which he lived among the men”—to use the psalm—“and let his glory and power be captured by the enemy, and despised his inheritance.” The most moving prophesy came true, namely: “His priests were cut down by weapons and his widows did not cry,” according to the scripture: “Sent them the anger of Thee wrath, alas! And fury, and rage, and grief, sent by cruel angels.” Then the high priests and the citizens were heartbreakingly driven away and subjected to so many different kinds of torment and slander. Oh trouble! On account of his piety even the patriarch was exiled, that light of the lights and Christ-like image! Many said then: “It would be better if the sun went out than the tongue of Euthymius to fall silent!” I pity you, oh church, I pity you on account of this sudden devastation! I am talking to you, glory of Tarnov! You turned to what from what! Then the feet of the iniquitous trod on the unapproachable holy of holies; then it was fulfilled what the Lord said: “When you see the defilement of abandonment to reign in the holy place.” Alas, the priests and a great multitude of people suffered in the open: they had neither houses of prayer nor could they find refuge, like the iniquitous, in the rightfulness of the Law. With one voice they all cried out laud: “Behold our sufferings and have fear!” Even more piteously they cried, saying: “Oh earth and heaven, suffer with us!” For what David said happened to us: “I expected someone to commiserate with me, but there is none; I sought a consoler, but found none.” They begged the unfeeling creature for pity. Through the wrath of God the enemies were allowed to ruthlessly oppose the pious: verily, great was the audacity of the iniquitous against the pious! Oh shame! Many went over to the nefarious Mohammedan faith: some, because they were scared, out of fear, others, because they were softened by temptation or vanquished by material acquisitions. Still others joined the enemy because on account of their stupidity they were seduced through writings and deceptions. The Providence is often in the custom of subjecting the pious to temptation, having prepared for them ahead of time great rewards in Heaven, and for the enemies, in the same manner, endless and eternal torments.

In the second year,¹⁸⁶ our most pious tsar willed to send to the above mentioned city of Tarnov his most beloved, valiant, and wise son or, to put it better, the new Christ-loving Constantine, and with him your

¹⁸⁶ After the fall of Tarnov, that is, in 1395.

humble servant to take care of some necessary and important matters of state. We arrived at the place with Christ's grace, solemnly and with the glory and splendour that befit a tsar and a high priest, and were welcomed by the local prince¹⁸⁷ with great honors and attention. We spent there a considerable amount of time and it reached the ears of your humble servant as well as the tsar's, that the most holy, honorable, and sweetly aromatic body of the venerable Philothea shone in one of the monasteries of our Lady the Mother of God, bathing everyone in the rays of its healing gifts. When the wearer of the crown heard this he greatly delighted in it and his heart was fired up by divine love. Like a deer longing for water springs he desired to obtain, by any means possible, and enjoy the incorruptible treasure of the holy relics of the venerable. Finding an appropriate time, he came up with a plan, good and worthy of praise. He promptly sent to the prince of Tarnov one of his magnates to request neither gold or silver, nor something else perishable and of short duration, but the most praised casket of the venerable. What could have been more worthy to him than the body of the venerable? This is what he thought in himself: "I am ready to part with half of my wealth; I am ready to give up everything, gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones. I will give up all this gladly; I will deprive myself of everything if I could obtain the treasure that I desire from the bottom of my heart."

The prince, as he heard that, was quite inclined to fulfill the request. With speed and diligence, as he did in other cases, he obeyed him in this case as well and gave us what we so much desired. When he learned of this, for great joy the tsar thought he was walking not on earth but on the clouds. With great devotion he kissed the holy relics. Then, having enjoyed them, he sent us home ahead of himself. We hitched the chariot, raised devoutly the holy and venerable body and adorned richly the casket of the holy treasure, wrapping it with bright red cloths and fabrics. We added fragrant oils and burning lamps and full of joy set out for home, singing and praising the Lord. When we crossed the borders of that land and with God's help came to our own land and all the clerics of our city learned about this, they came to meet us together with the monastic estate and the simple people from the city and its district, the priests and the levites dressed in holy white attires, with candels and aromatic lamps, and all shouted as one: "Glory

¹⁸⁷ The Ottoman governor.

to God in Heaven! Today we on earth are granted peace and blessing!" The countless multitude of Christ-loving and blessed people made such a congestion that it looked like the surface of the sea, making waves as if a single mass of water moved as they followed the body. When he reached our great metropolitan church, the most honorable temple of our Lady Mother of God, we solemnly laid down the most pure and much praised body of the venerable Philothea.

It takes a greater mind to praise her [appropriately]. What worthy song can my poor mind offer to her? With what fitting flowers can we adorn her? Verily, the earthly spirit pales when exposed to the display of the great deeds she has accomplished. Blessed indeed is our city, which owns the inheritance of your most holy relics, oh Philothea! Ours is the heavy burden to treasure and take care of them. Blessed is Tsar Constantine, young in years but wise for millennia, for among his other good deeds he did this too, the *translatio* of your venerable relics, as well as those of the forever remembered and most holy and venerable Petka, and the thrice-blessed Tsarina Theophano. To him this brought great glory, guardians for his body, and protection for his soul. Blessed are we as well, who welcomed in our city, to give you your due, your council of three. Shining upon us with the rays of grace you give salvation to those who come here. Because of this, even though unworthy of offering you appropriate praise, we boldly did what we were capable of: I trust you will take it as alms. Let no one diminish their rank and be ashamed of their poverty! For the glorious Philothea gives away free gifts and pours out abundant grace which surpasses the labors of everyone so that all who have strong faith can come and see the fulfillment of their desires in person. Come, all of you who have wrecked limbs and afflictions of long standing; the reward for all of you is forthcoming. Today, most glorious and marvelous miracles took place in our city and in the house of the great tsar. Invisible angels bless you together with us, many archangels praise you. Like a cherub you flew from the earth to the Kingdom of Heaven; like the trumpet of the psalm you appeared in the universe. Through you the Creator of all is praised incessantly. This is why it is just that the tsars, the princes, and the ecclesiastical ranks bow to you with zeal and devotion. We see how priestly hands carry you solemnly behind the curtain in the inapproachable Holy of Holies. You proceed solemnly on the earth with the pure walk of the holy soul in the company of high priests and gift-giving angels who stand about you. Therefore, come along today oh you Christ-loving people, triumph spiritually together with the high

priests and the shepherds. I want to celebrate a feast no lesser than and as glorious as any other feast! Come, let us praise the defender of the Christians which we all share with God-inspired songs: the deliverer of the grieving, the liberator of the enslaved, the return of the exiled ones, the generous nurse of the orphans, the merciful guide in truth of the children, the unexhaustible treasury of the destitute! Truly, how marvelous is your love for your natural kin! Who gathered together this image of the universe but you, who ascended to the seraphs and who stands incorporeal before the throne of glory on which you behold God and pray to Him for us and for the sins of the people?

Oh most glorious mother, blessed in God Philothea, who accepted the prayers we offer you today, do not cease to pray on our behalf to God, with whom you discourse face to face rather than vicariously or through divination. Pray for our corporeal and spiritual health! Like a child-loving mother accept our prayers and childish utterings! Be the helper of those afflicted by evil! Raise your holy hands over the flock that your Creator and God entrusted to us! Intercede directly on our behalf so that we as well as they are admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven! Grant this city, which was given to you and which inherited your most glorious relics, salvation and deliverance from the rage of the pagans and the attacks of the barbarians! Rescue it from the God-permitted wrath and fury! Strengthen and protect from tribulations the state of its Christ-loving tsars [Sratsimir and Constantine]! Guard the tsars, who kiss devoutly your holy relics and with joyful heart celebrate your triumph! For you have the overwhelming power; you have the impregnable fortress. You performed many deeds in Christ because you achieved perfection in virtue, emulated the passions of the Saviour, and became equal to angels! May you never tire in your prayers on our behalf and interceding for our salvation! Open the gates of your mercy, grant us the kindness of your good heart, accept our heart-felt prayers, give us the blessing of your virtue, so that in the midst of joy and elation we always perform prayers on your feast day for the glory and praise of the most glorified and united Trinity to which all glory, honor, and worship is due, always, now, forever, and for all ages, amen!

Gregory Tsamblak, Panegyric of Patriarch Euthymius, first quarter of the fifteenth century. 148

The panegyric of Euthymius is perhaps the most important work of Gregory Tsamblak (1365–1420), the best and most gifted of Euthymius' disciples.

Stemming from a noble lineage in the capital Tarnov, he dedicated his life to learning and donned the monastic habit in his youth. After a brief stint on Mount Athos he appears to have returned to Bulgaria, perhaps only to witness the fall of Tarnov in 1393. From here, it was life in exile: further study in Constantinople, ecclesiastical mission to Moldava, residence in Serbia, and then the position of abbot of the monastery of Njamts. In 1414 he became metropolitan of Kiev, at the instigation of the Lithuanian Prince Vitovt, a move that brought him three anathemas by the Patriarch of Constantinople and Moscow's metropolitan. In 1418 he led an Orthodox delegation to the Council of Konstanz where he supported the union of the churches. The panegyric of Euthymius, small part of his prolific output, was most likely composed in 1414–1418 while Tsamblak was in Russia. Older scholarship stressed Tsamblak's dependence on Patriarch Kallistos's *Life of Theodosius*; recent studies emphasize Tsamblak's original approach and impressive writing skills. Edition: Kałużniacki, *Aus der panegyrischen Litteratur der Südslaven*, 22–88; P. Rusev, Iv. Galabov, A. Davidov, and G. Danchev, *Pohvalno slovo za Evtimij ot Grigorij Tsamblak* (Sofia, 1971). Other translations into English: *MB*, 261–289.

If Aaron, the ancient priest of the Old Testament, was deemed worthy of the remembrance accorded to the servants of God because he purified the bodies of the polluted through sacrifice of wordless creatures, sprinkling them with the blood of calves and he-goats and the ashes of young cows, and because of that the prophet will always mention him in the church, as it is written in the book of psalms: “Moses and Aaron among His priests,” and again: “Sent Moses, His servant, and Aaron, whom He had chosen,” and again, “Led His people like a flock of sheep through the hand of Moses and Aaron,” is not Euthymius, the executor of unfathomable mysteries and participant in the apostolic glory, the priest of that great sacrifice and the teacher of the truth, which the angels strive to comprehend, and which he kept immaculate and lived in it in most pure manner, and, finally, because he, our light, offered himself as a holy and God-pleasing sacrifice through his manifold sufferings, even more worthy of praise?

But how can we praise with words him who, even though he was the master of supreme eloquence, taught the lovers of the scriptures to praise virtue with silence instead of with speech? Him, who went farther than the limits of nature; who, completely immersed in the observation of the divine asserted that life is not in the body but in learning the divine language; about whom the psalmist, weaving his speech, said: “My tongue is the stylus of a fast-writing scribe.”

How can we, therefore, dare praise him?

Nonetheless, we will dare, spurred by diligence: not so much because it is difficult for us, who call ourselves children of such a father, to

remain silent nor because our praise will increase his fame—that is not possible, for he is counted among the apostles, increasing their number—but to nudge those who listen to diligence and fire them up with similar desires. Many are his accomplishments, which our tongue is incapable of describing; but with a few small examples we will show you the man in the way, as some will say, that the eagle is known by its feathers and the lion by its fangs.

And because he is now counted among the apostles, as I already said, it was only normal that since his youth he would desire their way of life, emulating the supreme apostle Peter and the sons of Zabedee. Not only did he forsake everything but, despising it, followed Christ, who knew and loved poverty and promised Heaven for its sake, as Paul testifies after he ascended to the Third Heaven. He counted himself a denizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is built by living stones, whose master and creator is God. He believed that his fatherland was Paradise, the first settlement of man, the only honor for our race, which links us to God and which we cannot reach in any other way but through diligence. Because “to all those who accepted Him,” said the voice of the Lord, “He granted the power of children of God.” What can be more honorable than that kind of nobility?

Even though the reason of good men fails them in their young age for their mind is not yet perfect on account of their youth, he demonstrated early on what kind of man he would be by the end of his life. He was just like the grafted threes, which by shooting up straight tell the tillers of the earth how beautiful they will be when fully grown. Other men’s souls are prone to make mistakes and often slip into vain and useless things—something common in youth—but he confirmed, with his desire for perfect life, the truth of David’s words that the righteous man flourishes like a Phoenician palm. This is the only tree which grows in equal girth from the ground to its top and does not branch out with time as it grows. He blossomed in a similar manner and, choosing the life of perfection and striving for the heights, promptly set himself apart.

Having chosen the true and high wisdom called monastic life, he loved the desert like Elijah and John [the Baptist], praised its use, and strove to it with his entire being. It [the desert] made the crows feed Elijah, it made it possible for him to see God—for as long as this is possible for a man—in the guise of a transparent shadow, it helped him to offer burned sacrifice with fire from Heaven, and through it he allowed the clouds to serve their usual service, the reign. As for John,

it fed him with fruit, made him the greatest among those born of a woman, chose him to baptize in penance, and helped him lay hands on the One who baptized with the Holy Spirit. He [Euthymius] had them as teachers not only in the heremitic life but in humility as well. For neither Elijah, who performed most glorious miracles, took pride in them nor did John, who was more than a man, get puffed up by this. They lived preaching humility above all and so were able to see before themselves the reward for their great accomplishments. For the burden of pride does not habitually lift up the one who bears it like Elijah to Heaven, nor does it make him like an angel, like John, but smashes him cruelly and turns angels into demons.

Emulating them, he [Euthymius] lived in deep thought and his every-day chores did not have an effect on him. Who adhered so steadfastly to humility, through which the virtues of spiritual life are secured as if on a solid foundation? It is the feat of the martyr, it is struggle and victory. I confess the truth and no other person will confirm my words but he himself, who was obedient to his death, even to death on the cross. Was there anyone else who, like the most wise Euthymius, tested on his own body the tricks, the deceptions, and the ruses of the sly one in the same way in which the blacksmith tests red-hot iron in water, so that in return of many years of deprivation he received sharpness of the mind and warm diligence, and through these surpassed all those who had already toiled much in that wisdom? Who has stood up in night-long prayer until he felt more like a stone pillar than a man? Who has praised God with incessant singing not seven times a day, as it is in the Psalms, but in such a way that his very breath is a song sent out from the depths of his soul? Who has given up resting on a bed, even on bare earth, and satisfied his need of sleep on a chair—or, better, drove the sleep away? Warriors skilled in battle and foremost in courage, wishing to win a splendid victory over the enemy, many times trick them to think that they are fleeing, so that those who chase them are deceived and the thought of victory make them lower their guard and so, becoming captives of deception, they are confused and become like children who have been tricked. In the same way, our seasoned warrior of spiritual wars pretended to be overcome by nature, but emerged the victor over it. The sly one's lot was fruitless struggle and the mocking of retreat; the blessed one received the freedom of victory and glory for his skill. Who was so adamant at the instigations and seductions of the stomach that wanted much, and punished it with refusing to take food? Who so wisely tamed the stomach that caused him pains with

its stirrings, by partaking in the food of David and the three youths? Euthymius did not honor even the coin of the tsar because after Paul and like Paul he was the teacher of altruism and did and spoke like him, saying: “We should be satisfied with food and clothing.” Who among the people of the world liked so much markets and worldly feasts as he liked the peaceful desert?

Thus, living in obedience and fulfilling the commands of his elder [Theodosius], the man of God Euthymius received the brotherhood in his charge. Let no one think that his burden consisted in providing food and clothing for their bodies! No, his business was the salvation of their souls and the preservation of their mind. The wise elder entrusted this to Euthymius, the skillful leader, while he devoted himself to complete silence at a nearby place. Theodosius was the first one to settle in that far-away desert [of Paroria] and built a dwelling for men and a store-house of virtue. Before that, on account of its isolation, it was more accessible to demons than to men. Having admitted this great pillar of the church [Euthymius] in his youth, with the milk of piety and his instruction about the struggles of the soul, he turned him into a perfect man and made him a weapon of the Spirit, who needs such men. [Theodosius] inherited the rule of wise life from Gregory the Sinaite, foremost in his visions of God, who through the tested rule of wisdom made the mountains of Paroria as good as the mountain of Sinai. The venerable Theodosius carried on the life and service of Gregory, and Euthymius these of Theodosius.

As I said, Theodosius settled near the foundation. Once it happened that Euthymius visited him as he usually did during an arranged hour of the night. When he arrived and made himself known from afar, he did not hear the father welcoming him. He knocked many times, but as the father did not respond he decided to come closer to the cell fearing that this unusual silence did not bode well. He knocked on the door and as the voice he waited for was still not heard as before, he looked up through a small window and beheld the inspired [father] standing straight up, all wrapped in bright light like Samuel in the Bible. With his blessed arms raised up he stood there without moving a limb. His eyes too, like his arms, were raised upwards. Seized by fear and terror, Euthymius turned back and, beating the plank called the brothers for the morning service. Coming back a second time during that night, he found the great man sitting on the ground and crying bitterly. At this sight he threw himself at the father’s feet, with his face to the ground and, crying along, through tears asked him why he grieved. [Theodosius]

replied that the reason was the conquest of the country by the Turks and the complete abandonment of the beloved desert. "But you my son," he said, "be brave! Your heart should not waiver, for you will be honored with chains and apostolic persecution!"

God, in his wisdom, decreed this so that it becomes evident to everyone that the venerable elder who had been granted many rewards and honors by His grace was not deprived of the gift of prophecy either, and that the holy Euthymius, having heard the will of God, would not give up his calling for in the end he would be sent to intercede for the people like a second Moses.

Not long afterwards the prophecy came true and the barbarians devastated everything in the vicinity. Leaving behind the beloved desert because of them, Euthymius accompanied the elder to the great city of Constantine. Shortly thereafter the new Isaak honored the new Abraham and the ascended Elijah the new Elysees, inheriting a double grace, for in the place of a sheepskin he inherited the body of his elder.

What happened after that? Virtue made the man famous everywhere and as if pointing a finger at him, demonstrated his deeds: the fruits of silence, humility, thinking, and beholding [*hesychia*]. It was a marvel to see what he did, and worthy of the Divine Providence. Men famous in the city on account of their virtue were forgotten, relatives were brushed aside, and this poor, destitute, property-less foreigner from afar was sought after to provide spiritual food and fill with grace the hungry souls. That was how God made the faithful Abraham famous abroad, commanding him to leave his land and the home of his father for the love of Him. That was how He raised Joseph on account of his abstinence and meekness, ordering that all of Egypt and the house of the Pharaoh were in his hands. However, those He made great among barbarians and in secular deeds; Euthymius [He made great] among wise men dedicated to spiritual perfection.

The monks who still live in the Studite foundation will testify about his sufferings and his corporeal accomplishments. Trusted witnesses are the denizens of the Laura of the blessed Athanasius and the men of silence in Mount Athos as well. Such was the wish of the Divine Providence: that the Holy Mount accepted the one worthy of marveling and enjoyed fully his goodness so that it was a witness and a forceful spokesman for his fame.

If we proclaim someone to be great and praise those who had achieved but little for the lack of anyone better than them, how much more should we praise the man who, because he was made of flesh,

was considered inferior to angels but who shone among the multitude of God-bearing men, demonstrating and teaching great things? And because he did nothing to show off but [labored] mostly in secret he suffered like the man who attempted to hide a burning lamp and covered its rays with a glass vessel.

There is a tower in that holy mountain called Selina which proclaims without a voice the silent deeds and the struggles of the saint against the invisible enemies whom he mowed down and turned to flight with the arrows of prayer, throwing from on high the flame of patience to burn their shameless faces while his mind reached for heaven, which he enjoyed in his mind even before he left this world. Praised is Gedeon, who defeated the Mydians and in the same manner David is famous among the singers, for he defeated tens of thousands. But those were warriors of flesh and blood and were vulnerable to the feeling of pain and the pouring out of blood. Euthymius distinguished himself vanquishing [the enemy] in a battle of minds, a battle as much harder and fiercer than the corporeal one as the mind is higher and stronger than the flesh. That is why Paul, arming us for victory in such a struggle, said: “Our fight is not with the flesh and blood but with powers far superior, with the rulers of darkness in this age, and with the subaltern spirits of hatred.”

When the sly demon saw himself defeated in this manner, having exhausted all of his tricks and overturned every stone without finding anything to defeat the undefeatable, he supposed that he would achieve his expectations through temptations, but he was wrong: the wounds he inflicted were like those caused by children’s arrows and demonstrated the helplessness of his nature against the fearless demeanor of the man.

When he saw that the soul of the tsar likes gold more than Christ and that his ear is prone to turn to where the talk is about gold, the sly demon used a man who pretended, in dress and life, to be a monk but was in fact his vessel, and through him made it known to the tsar that Euthymius possessed much wealth and a royal treasury of great price and that was what he sought to mask with his silence, so that no one would recognize him. Immediately—oh, shamelessness—[the emperor] arrived in the harbor of the Laura; not through letters and envoys or through other means did he seek to investigate the man who distinguished himself in such an honorable way. The tsar, therefore, asked him for what he did not have; he demonstrated what he had. The one who investigated with force was exposed as afflicted by insatiable

avarice; the one who was investigated and from whom [gold] was sought demonstrated the virtue that he kept secret and that was known only to God, and exposed it so that everyone sees it, not only before the monks, but before all the lay people as well who arrived with the tsar across the sea and overland, and made himself famous through his name and the crown of his love for humanity.

Then the word of the Gospel became true: "Let your light shine among men so that they see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in Heaven." That is how Satan was brought down again. He tripped over what he planned to trip over with. He attempted to pollute the man but saw himself shamed and the other elevated. Those whom he had gathered from among different nations and cities to fight the saint with their pugnacious minds were turned into preachers of his virtue. This happened to Job as well. When his inquisitor thought him done, he saw him not only not chided by his friends on account of his meekness and patience but praised and acclaimed by the peoples of the entire universe as well. The apostle shouted loudly to all churches in which he taught: "You heard about Job's patience and now you saw the end that the Lord granted him!"

But the tsar did not think this way and still strove to see with his eyes and touch with his hands what he had enjoyed hearing about. Fierce is that passion, more fierce than anything else; that is why the blessed Paul rightly called it idolatry. Because when it takes hold of the soul it is like a madman swallowed by the attraction of a strong desire that despises not only shame but life itself. The man of God was exiled on an island called Lemnos about sixty *poprishta* from the Lavra.

Later, when the tsar set out for Byzantium, a divine apparition appeared to him and threatened him with His wrath if he did not set the blessed one free as he deserved. Forced more by fear than of his own will and humbled in his royal pride, he fell on his knees, prayed and begged forgiveness. The man who used to be merciless, proud, and arrogant, now begged forgiveness like a miserable slave; the one who was insulted, suffering, and humble, untied the one who tied him, forgave the one who offended him, took pity on the slanderer, blessed the blasphemer. Virtue is used to show itself through its enemies: it grows larger through those who seek to darken it and multiplies its faculties by accepting all that. Consider how burning ambers, when someone throws straw on them to cover them, suddenly burst out in larger flames through it: so it was here. Euthymius was known to a few

for his virtue, but after the trial he became known to many, or, to put it simply, shone before all.

Having spent so much time abroad, he finally decided that the motherland is to be preferred before everything else, even though there were many there who held him back and asked him to live with them. He set off for home bringing along diverse riches of wisdom and prudence, which he had purchased like a shrewd merchant in distant lands. Indeed, the one who knows the true value of objects would consider it hardly worthy of praise that the request of such a great city was brushed aside as was the desire of its chosen men to keep him and the zeal of the magnates who came to him with the same goal in mind. They all wanted the great Euthymius to stay with them, for he was the paragon of virtue and the law-giver of [monastic] life. Yet he eschewed all things leading to pride because he was convinced that after malice pride is the chief cause of suffering in life. He longed to devote himself to silence in his motherland as if in a safe haven. Besides, the land that had given birth to him called for an adornment and a guardian in times of need, rich in spiritual gifts; it had nourished him with milk and now asked for a nurturer; yearned to advance on the path of eternal life with the help of its own fruit rather than that of a foreign crop.

When he arrived there he did not wish to make himself known and did not join those who eagerly competed in virtue, desiring to surpass each other in it. He did not give in to the requests and the warm tears of the wealthy but settled in a cave. It was located far away from the city's din and other noise. There he raised a temple in honor of the most holy Trinity, whose champion he was. A swarm of disciples gathered around him. How many were those, and how honorable, who wished to call themselves disciples of such a father and sought the face of the God of Jacob! In nothing did he show himself a human seeking the company of fellows, acquaintances, favorites, or relatives, but shone like a free and superior being. Nothing distracted him from the quest for spiritual wisdom. He did not wish to mix the lowly with the high things and the affairs of the flesh with those of the mind. He even taught with the words of the apostle: "These hands of mine served me and those who were with me" and did as he taught.

And what did he do with his hands? Did he drive away despair or did he acquire something of little value? Or did he take care of his daily bread? None of the above. All that is considered valuable in this world had to him no more value than an old cloth that had been thrown out.

He did not care what he ate. Above all, with all diligence he strove to be useful to the brothers for this is something more valuable than the tsar's treasury and is better than the grain stores of the supplier of Egypt. Because the words of the Lors are pure words, like hot silver cleansed from dirt and tested seven times. "Sweet are Thee words on my mouth, sweeter than honey on my tongue!" But what did he do? He translated the divine scriptures from the Greek into the Bulgarian language. As you hear me saying this please let no one think that I am digressing from the truth, given that the Bulgarian books are of quite an old age, having been in existence since the very beginning of the conversion of the people, and given that this [man], great among the saints, who lived even to our own days, studied these same books himself. I know that and it is indeed so.

And yet, be it because the early translators did not have perfect command of the language and doctrines of the Greeks, or because they used a rough language, the books they produced were not in agreement in content and differed in meaning from the Greek scriptures, and were quite uncouth in style as well. They were considered correct only because they were called pious books, but there were many errors hidden within them and they were not in accord with true dogma. That is why they gave birth to many a heresy. This new law-giver destroyed all of the old books and, carrying in his hands those on which he labored, descended from the mountain of the mind and gave to the church, like the tablets written by God, that genuine heavenly treasure: the new [scriptures], correct, in accordance with the Gospels, unwaivering in the strenght of their dogmas, God's grace for the souls of the pious, knife for the tongues and fire for the faces of the heretics. He cried out loud along with Paul: "The old is gone; here, everything is new."

Tell me, how much praise is all that worth, how many distinctions, how much reward? Does not the greatness of its virtue resemble the writings done by God, the tablets on which the divine will inscribed His commandments? The same was predetermined for the great Euthymius what was predetermined for Moses: to rise above the visible and have his spirit penetrate the invisible and the unreachabele, to transcend darkness and comprehend the divine secrets, and lead in person all the people to knowledge of God. However, his mountain was not a visible hill of this earth but the height of knowledge of the true dogmas. His darkness was the insight others did not have. The tablets and the writings on them, were soul and reason together, both purified and

sanctified for God. Through their truthful commandments the beauty of the mystery of the great divine zeal, the primary source of virtue, was revealed to many peoples. For He glorified Moses and Elijah. The first He made a law-giver, the second He honored with ascension. He made Jesus Navine military commander, Phinehas, the killer of Zimri, He elevated through the priesthood. [He] allowed Samuel to foresee the future; took David from the milk-bearing flock and made him tsar of Israel; and many others of the Old Testament did He make famous and worthy of permanent remembrance. However, such men, zealots of the Word of wisdom, who knew the writings closely and through them, the scriptures, are to be found not only in the Old Testament. Among them is the tsar of Egypt Ptolemy who, spurred by the reasoning of his virtuous soul, ordered all God-inspired books of the Old Testament to be translated diligently into the Hellenic tongue. Look at the dedication of the man: to achieve what he wanted, he set free more than 120,000 Jews, who had slaved for the Egyptians for many years. Moreover, he sent presents to the high priest and most precious gifts for the Temple, as well as letters in which he requested the scriptures and men to interpret them. The high priest sent him such men, six of each tribe, knowing both their native law and the Hellenic tongue to perfection. And thus, helped by God, in a few days they completed [the translation spurred] by the divine will and the royal diligence.

The Holy Spirit of the salvific Providence willed this to be accomplished many years ago, to shut down for good the mouths of the shameless Jews and the deliberations of the mindless Hellenes. For who can witness, tell me, the Testament and the Prophets so artfully translated from the Hebrew tongue into ours and commented upon now, when the number of the men who know the law diminished, partly because of the shortness of life, partly because of the frequent enslavings and burnings, which afflict the peoples who follow the cross, when the end, which is desolation and desertion of temples and homes, is near? “For You will destroy them,” said David, “and will not rebuild them,” as Joseph bewails, who describes their troubles in detail.

Therefore, if that man inspired such awe and was praised so much and is remembered on account of his wisdom, being a Hellene [i.e., pagan] and a man outside of the law and the Prophets, does not our father deserve even more praise, for many years, who demonstrated such a mighty zeal and who, through his sermons, tore apart the nets of the heretics like the tussue of a spider-web?

While Euthymius lived in such a manner, the shepherd of the people¹⁸⁸ ended his blessed and worthy of a saint's life. He left his body on earth, but his soul soared up to be with the heavenly [dwellers]. It was appropriate that the bishops and the people care for nothing but a [new] shepherd. They pleaded with Euthymius with one mouth and one voice, as if by some agreement. And because it is not meet that the light is kept under cover but should be put on a stand, he, forced by the bishops that the Holy Spirit had gathered for the occasion, took over the helm of the church as much as he did not desire it.

What next? He sat on the throne of the master and immediately took pity on his connationals and made it evident in his deeds, thus resembling the great Moses and even surpassing him after his consecration. For the latter, having led the people out of Egypt, directed them toward the Promised Land while Euthymius, great on account of his human and divine wisdom, [led them] from the land to heaven.

With his very appearance and his habitual diligence he was of much use for those who observed him and with his speech, flowing like a fast-running brook, he watered them with spiritual insights. Compared to his speech, what are the waters of the river irrigating Egypt or the stone that satisfied the thirst of the Hebrews in the desert? The pupils of Euthymius are like orchards which, when watered by the rain, grow happily before the eyes of the gardener. With his speech, he watered them all together like the rain and they grew together diligently and bore the fruit, which Paul testifies for, calling it a spiritual fruit. He never picked the wrong time for the sawing of his sermons. He was the model instructor, for he taught virtue and showed himself perfect in deed as well: because those who listen to sermons first see the teacher with their eyes.

Who among those whose conscience is as meek as his is as humble as him, and as rich in spiritual gifts for he followed the Lord in this as well, when He says: "Learn from me for I am meek and humble at heart." Who is so meek, and blends virtue with beauty, so that he does not need the weapon of wrath when guiding such a flock?

Many of those who call themselves shepherds think that they can guard their flocks with wrath but only bring harm unto them and receive deserved punishment from the Master. For the shepherd who lacks skill scares a sheep with his yelling and, suddenly, it falls down

¹⁸⁸ Patriarch Ioanikios (?–1375).

and he loses it from sight; throwing his stick to scare the flock, he hits another one over the head and it immediately drops dead; mad from running, he kicks a third one and breaks down its backbone and the rib cage which protects the intestines. For the body of this animal is weak, composed only of bones and wool and for that reason is destined by the Creator Himself to live with man; thinking about everything He arranged everything so that it not only satisfies our need of wool and milk but receives from us pity, care, and protection, because it cannot resist firmly the predator it might encounter.

Our shepherd gazes meekly, moves his lips softly, and calls the flock with the whistle of the spirit, gathers them together and thus unites them, carrying the lame on his shoulders so that they do not fall back. And the sheep, having developed the habit, run after the sweet voice of the shepherd and steer clear from others. Thus, walking before them with his feet rejoicing he led them to the meadows of the apostles and the prophets. Turning back often and observing their obedience, how they walked, how orderly they were, how they fattened, he rejoiced because he was to be fully rewarded by the master of the flock, and much honored as well. And when the heat of the sun caused the flock to yearn greatly for coolness, he took them to the top of the Gospels' mountain and there he set them completely free; after that, he sent them to heaven.

The shepherd was also skillful in the following: taming the wild sheep, he brought them back into the fold. Behold another of his qualities: wild beasts, even when they were many, fled far away from the flock, for they feared him constantly and trembled at hearing his voice as if it were a thunderbolt, even though they were not driven away by arrows, slings, or the barking of dogs. Let me mention, among other things, something that many of the locals knew well. A certain Piron, a fervent guardian of the heresy of Nestorius, Akindin, and Barlaam and, on top of this an adherent of iconoclasm, left Constantinople and arrived in Tarnov. He was a wolf covered with a sheep's skin. After a while he found there the pseudo-monk Theodosius called Phudul, a like-minded fellow agreed with him in everything. What evil seed of hatred did that couple not plant, tearing apart the body of the church by dividing the multitude with lascivious teachings, stirring up unrest and, above all, turned court officials and magnates into madmen? They drove the Orthodox flock into a great trouble for they urged those who listened to them, good and evil alike, to emulate those who have power.

What then, did the heavenly man do? As soon as he learned about this, he likened his mouth to those priestly trumpets which shattered the walls of Jerusalem and vigorously applied himself to suppressing [the forces of] destruction. During the day he gathered the people in the temple, instructed and encouraged them, freed them from misgivings and denounced the evil weeds. At night he prayed through tears and begged help from Heaven and God. Promptly, he cast them down like Annius Ambrius; vanquished them like Amalik; with the knife of the word he cut down disgrace. He drove them far away from his church's diocese like Arabian wolves.

Who is more piteous than him who used to shed tears at the sight of the poor even though he lived in equal destitution? That is why he made his dwelling not in one place or another but embraced the entire city. "For we do not know, children," he used to say, "whether we will be considered worthy of receiving Christ if we do not we receive the poor. Because He himself said it: "I am telling you the truth, whatever you did to one of my little brothers, you did it to me."

He was also a physician who wisely cured spiritual fever and other desires, cutting off skillfully the roots of sin at the very bottom. This was evident on many occasions: consider this one. Near the city of Tarnov there is a place separated from it only by the river; it is visible from everywhere, full of thickets, and watered abundantly by flowing springs.¹⁸⁹ The generosity of the water was a pleasure for the eye before it satisfied hunger: thickly overgrown with threes, it is full of all kinds of fruit and flowers. Above them a large and mighty forest rises. In this place there is a temple of the most pure virgin and Mother of Christ and God, where every summer the populace of the entire city gathered together with the women and the children and, according to the custom, the feast lasted eight days.¹⁹⁰ When they got together on account of the feast and ostensibly to pray, they abandoned themselves to sin and every vice that invites the divine anger for the emptiness of that place is conducive for the desires of the lustful ones. What did the wisest man do? He cut off the root and the fruit of sin died out: he cancelled the feast and forbade them to gather at such feasts. In this

¹⁸⁹ The hill of Trapezitsa.

¹⁹⁰ On Midsummer Day; the pagan trappings of the feast are condemned in the *Synodikon*.

way he saved many from perdition. This is how the meek physician took care of the common good.

Once, there was a great draught, such as has been in the time of the prophet Elijah. There was not even a trace of dew on the ground nor of moisture: the earth cracked open by the draught and released smoke as if from a burning furnace. Hunger hung above the land. The fields looked like city streets and no one harbored any hope to clear the threshing ground and sharpen the sickle. Then the citizens went to Euthymius to bewail the upcoming disaster. Pity for them filled his philanthropic soul and he advised them not to loose hope but to place their trust in God, who can, if it is His will, turn the sea into dry ground and the hard stone and the waterless desert into gushing springs. On the next day he commanded them to follow him, together with their women and children. Then he spent the night in prayer and as soon as the sun was up he went out in the fields with all the servants of the altar. He walked around the place until he tired and saw the danger with his own eyes. When the deacon said: “Let us bow our heads before the Lord,” he immediately fell on his knees, lifted up his holy arms and eyes, and prayed. The people did not hear his voice for he did not pray with his mouth but from the heart and his forcefull prayer reached the ears of the Lord Savaot. Promptly, he solicited pity. The signs of rain appeared on the sky: the wind blew from the northern mountaintops and carried clouds as full as wine skins. As soon as the saint went back to town it began to pour down, not a sudden and hard downpour, but a quiet and watering one, and it did not stop raining until it made the fruit swell and begin to ripen. This is how God showed his confidence in the man. This is how Euthymius well demonstrated what God had said: “Whoever believes in me will perform the deeds that I perform.”

On account of this, piety was much trusted. It quickly became known what had happened and the love for the shepherd grew. What the servants of Job said in the book, “Who will give us his flesh to satiate ourselves?” happened so that the entire populace could see him; for no one was satisfied with the desire to be sated by the words and appearance of the father but wanted to invite him in their home. When he visited, all those who were in the house were blessed by him. Moved by their prayers, he listened to them and used the visit to instill in them all kinds of virtue and turned them from corporeal beings into spiritual ones and from earthly into heavenly ones, telling them the words of Zakhei in the Gospel, “Here Lord, I am giving away half of my

property to the poor and if I have deceived anyone, I will repay them fourfold.” He praised their diligence and strengthened them with his blessings: “Today this household will be saved.”

Many people, not only from among the Bulgarians who were his apostolic lot, but from other far-away countries as well, all the way to the ocean in the north and to Illyric in the west, were attracted by the virtue of this man. They thought it a great accomplishment to see him and if they happened to hear his sermons they considered it salvation itself. When he found out their zeal, the imitator of Christ called them to himself and satiated their thirst with the drink of piety. This is how he became their teacher in piety and they taught it to their fatherlands. For what people related to the Bulgarians in speech did not receive his writings, his teachings, the toil and sweat of the one who used not his feet to carry out the word of the Gospels but his hand and instead of the apostolic nets applied the stylus and so pulled out those worthy of salvation from the depths of ignorance.

And because he taught in the manner of the apostles and instructed and guided to God perfect men, it was meet that he was subjected to the daily persecutions, sufferings, and death suffered by the apostles so that he too, who was like them in everything, did not fall behind in obtaining their glory. And because the prophets agree with the apostles, in his suffering he resembled the great Jeremiah, consecrated in the womb of his mother.

The barbarian tsar,¹⁹¹ whose victories and conquests of many peoples had filled him with pride, decided, being a hater of goodness, to devastate the city of Tarnov, having heard that it was great, beautiful, and fortified with walls, that it was situated in such a place that was difficult to capture because besides its walls it was fortified by nature as well and, moreover, that it had great riches and many people and was famous for its palaces and ecclesiastical buildings. For that reason, he gathered all Eastern [troops], beginning with the lands of Persia, Licaonia, and Asia and crossed over at the Dardanelles. Having found that all the troops of the West had already come together as he had ordered, so that he can surpass not only Darius, the King of the Persians and the Medes, but even Alexander of Macedon, he fell on the city without warning. He laid siege to it, not just here and there, but surrounding it completely. His fierce men were everywhere. The barbarian raged:

¹⁹¹ The Ottoman Sultan Bayazid I Ildirim (1389–1402).

he threatened to burn them [the citizens] with fire, cut them to pieces and subject them to other kinds of painful death if they continue to resist. He achieved his goal, not on account of his power, but because God's will allowed it.

Immediately, the high priest was driven out of the church and the creators of shamelessness took it over. The *kivot* of the Testament fell in the hands of the foreigners; the holy of holies became subject to the Assyrians and, the most important thing, the holy [gifts] were thrown to the dogs! Did the saint deserve that, tell me, to suffer so and behold with his eyes what even the ear could not take in? If David, who was a tsar and was outside the holy law, suffered so much, saying, "The pity for your home eats me up," and "The blasphemies of those who slander you fall on me," how much more suffered the high priest, whose toil and effort were being tramped upon!

And what did he do? Did he become more aggrieved than it was meet? Did he get frightened? Did he flee, seeing how his flock gets dispersed? Did he utter a lighthearted or harsh word, unworthy of his wisdom? Absolutely not! He even appeared before the tsar, tamed his addiction to killing, and transformed the terrible intentions of the barbarian into benevolent conduct, just like once the prophet Daniel [tamed] the lions in the pit and the youths, the fire in the furnace. For even barbarian fierceness is usually ashamed of the virtue of such men. As he [Bayazid] sighted from afar that he [Euthymius] was coming with his customary dignity, immersed in thought, without even looking at the [sad] spectacles before him that attracted the eye and the ear of the foolish, but passing by as if they were wall paintings [Bayazid], showing meekness on his face, did not remain sitting, but promptly got on his feet, honored him, and gave him the closest seat and listened to him who begged on behalf of the people, even though in the end he did not honor the agreement.

He was like a worthy commander who, even when seemingly vanquished, never turns his back to the enemy but gathers his forces and gains the victory in the end. Because he was thrown out of his church he went to another one, dedicated to the supreme [apostles] Peter and Paul. Placing himself under their patronage he performed even more heroic deeds. He took care to protect the people from the barbarian massacres, taught, consoled, lifted up the fallen ones, offered a helping hand to those who tripped over, straightened the laying, supported the weak, praised and urged to manliness those who fought. Others he cut off like rotting parts so that the entire body did not perish, and the

leprous he expelled from the sheep so that the disease did not spread among the entire flock. This man's latter accomplishments and victories over the sly one were greater than his former deeds, when he used to spend his days in peace. For the Divine Providence many times leaves the devil to stir up a storm against the saints so that they can, through suffering, vanquish him and get crowned while those who fight them and torment them get defeated and become the butt of laughter. That happened to Job. When, on account of all the evils, so many and so great that one cannot wrap his mind around them, the devil decided that the sufferer was vanquished and killed he saw himself in his [the saint's] feet tramped upon in such a way that he could not take his breath. The same happened to the apostles. When the devil thought that he had put a stop to the preaching of the Gospel and stirred up persecution, excited the torturer and persuaded the tsar to murder the apostles and give them over to painful death, then he saw that the Gospel had grown roots not only here and there, but the entire universe had become like the Second Heaven.

When the sly one saw himself bound up by his captives and wounded by his own arrows, he could not put up with the defeat of his army and its complete disarming, but stirred up an even greater and more terrible storm than the first one. A man's tongue will stiffen telling about it, and his bones will shake up.

The commander, a Turk that Bayazid had installed to govern the city, called on the men of God who surpassed others on account of their name, virtue, and kin, allegedly to discuss some affairs beneficial to everyone. They, following the evil news-bearer, walked like foolish sheep, which follow those who are going to slaughter them, and hastened to subject themselves to the murderous right hand, everyone with his blood. When he saw all of them in his hands, the bloodthirsty beast slaughtered them right in the middle of the church, or, to put it better, sanctified them. Feeling no shame on account of their white hair and no mercy on account of their youth he turned their throats into a plaything of the knife.

Oh, holy warriors! They did not go one at a time, but as they stood together before the torturer, they spat on him and promptly presented themselves to Christ to receive their [martyrs'] crowns. The torturer left their bodies to feed the birds of the sky and the Lord included their spirits among the humble angels. Soldiers, you kept your faith and did not diminish your number! Hear their number: they were a hundred

and ten whose blood painted the church red! And even though they were so many the web of the faith was not torn apart.

Such were the children of the blessed Euthymius, this is how they safeguarded his teaching and honored the effort of the man on their behalf. They lost not only their property, homes, children, and relatives, but persisted in the piety they had received from him as the lot of the father until their own blood was shed. Their honorable death was praised by the angels and is more than sublime praise for Euthymius; no words are necessary to strengthen the account of his accomplishments.

Then, seized by the soldiers, he courageously stood up before the tormentor. His soul knew no dread, he did not yield to fear, and the grace of the spirit which lived in him shone through the serenity of his face. His face did not change when they stripped him of his vestments, took him to the city wall for a shameful death, and prepared everything for the cutting of his head; he neither trembled nor showed any attachment to life. No, because he was a disciple of Paul and like him he hastened to separate from his body and live with Christ. That much became clear from the words with which he addressed the barbarian: “Oh, unjust man, why did you so mindlessly degrade and lowly abase the greatness of my [ecclesiastical] dignity? It was proper that the priest got sacrificed first, and the victims followed him; the shepherd had to walk before the sheep and the father before the children! They were all entrusted to me: that is why I had to drink the bitter cup first, because the worker who labors had to taste the sweet fruit first of all.”

This is how the wisest of men spoke and called on the executioner, and lowered his head, readily stretching his neck. The latter approached, preparing to strike the deadly stroke. However, the One who once struck and immobilized the arm of the tsar who, in defiance of the law, extended it to snatch the prophet, now in the same way froze that deadly right hand and made it incapable of action, as if it was the arm of a dead man attached to a live and moving body. What David prayed for came to pass: “Pay them back according to the deeds of their hands.” The one puffed up with pride and the entire Ishmaelite multitude was horrified. They did not dare tarry there any longer and hurriedly left the place; they threw the vestments on the back on the blessed and told him that he was free to go wherever he pleased.

Do you see now, what I said earlier, that the sly demon is defeated and brought low by the means through which he aims to vanquish great men? Here, therefore, our father broke down his imaginary powers and

shamed him in the hour of his death. And because it is impossible for a man die many deaths, he voluntarily fulfilled what has been written: "He was cut down and shone as a martyr without shedding his blood." Do you see how victory multiplied, how those whom the devil stirred up against the blessed Euthymius were forced to acknowledge the invincible power of Christ. When they saw the courage of the great man, his contempt for death, his faith in God, and his care for his children, as well as the most marvelous miracle with the arm of the executioner, they realized that the Christian faith was righteous. Some of them, thinking that they would incur the even greater wrath of Heaven if they continued to torment the high priest, left him alone and preferred to flee from there.

And what happened after that? Following the miracle, the barbarian ordered the citizens to be exiled to the East, for that was what the tsar's decree commanded, and the man of God to be exiled to Macedonia.¹⁹² He left together with the people like a new Jeremiah. The sight brought to tears even the stones of the city. Children separated from fathers and brothers from natural brothers because they did not lead out all of them together, so that they can have the consolation of seeing each other, but those who were distinguished on account of their birth, wealth, or the beauty of their faces they exiled, and the rest they left alone. These were days of lamentation! Is there anything bitterer than exile or harder than the separation from one's kin? The memory of the motherland and one's relatives always pierces the heart like a sting. This is why they embraced and kissed, taking farewell from each other: the country resounded with their laments. Among them the great Euthymius walked, supporting himself on his crozier, covered with tears, his soul wounded by a thousand arrows. He did not suffer [on account of his banishment], nor on account of illness or his old age, but because the suffering of the people and the children's tender age tore him apart.

When they reached the point where the shepherd was to be separated from them against his will—oh, can someone remember this without tears!—they fell at his feet; they covered them with streams of tears, touched them with their lips and their faces, kissed his hand, called him a shepherd, a teacher, and a child-loving father. Separating from him was for them like losing their souls. Some of the women placed

¹⁹² Thrace.

their children in his way; others, who were close, had the honor of kissing his hand, others [kissed] his clothes, drenching them with hot tears as they came near to him as if it were the hand of a saint; others, because of their faith pulled out the grass on which he walked; still others, pressed by the multitude and being unable to come closer, sighted from afar and with bitter tears asked for a last blessing and begged for forgiveness for in their souls they were certain that they will never see him alive again. He consoled and instructed them, and advised them to adhere to the divine commandments and keep pure the faith. Through it not only will their love of God be acknowledged, but those who will keep it will be glorified even in the place of their exile. “The same happened,” he told them, “to the grandsons of Abraham: first to Joseph, who was wrongfully sold by his brothers as a slave but was later glorified as tsar; then to the great Moses who saw the face of God, who was born in Egypt, in the house of slavery. He punished the tormentors by working the miracle of the sea waters and led all of his people out of Egypt and out of slavery. The same happened to Zerobbabel the Salatilite. Because of his piety, his glory shone even in imprisonment and in the tsar’s palace and he helped mightily for the liberation of Israel and the building of the temple. And what happened to Daniel, the tamer of lions, and the three youths who put out the fire? Did they not accomplish this, and more, with their faith? Paul is the witness, when he says: “They put out the fierce fire, shut down the mouths of the lions!” And what happened to the generous and great in faith Esther? She prayed to God and with fast and prayer she calmed the raging wrath of the Mydian tsar and set her Israeli compatriots free, so that, instead of perishing all in one day, their numbers reached those of the sand of the sea.” He advised them to be thankful for their afflictions and encouraged them, because of that, to hope for the indescribable grace. To sum up: with his sweet sermons he made them wear lightly their suffering. Having uttered these things with the tongue inspired by God, he knelt down and prayed with them. After the prayer he stood up and blessed them one last time. And when some among the people cried out loud, addressing him: “To whom are you leaving us, good shepherd?” he responded: “I am handing you over to the Holy Trinity, now and for all ages!”

When they reached the place where they led him and his desert-loving soul saw the mountain and noticed that the place was agreeable to his desires, tears appeared on his eyes. His heart warmed up by the prophetic capacity of the Spirit and he uttered these words: “Here is

the place of calm where I will spend the short life that I owe to God who guided me, until He frees me from the chains of the flesh.”

And what preoccupied Euthymius in exile? Fishing, the customary business of the apostles: however, catching not fish but men, day and night, indeed, every hour. For the people from the land around the mountain flocked to him like once Jerusalem and Judea to John the Baptist. Some were set free from diverse heresies as if healed of wounds; others fled the darkness of Saracen iniquity; still others left behind their mad lives like dirty clothing. The beginnings of every virtue were planted; people learned to know the Lord; those who were close [to him] taught the rest. And not only did multitudes flock to that place to see this new Elijah; the name of Euthymius, like a relic, spread about towns and villages, roads and markets, and houses and temples. The prophet put it well: “His teaching spread all over the land and his word reached the farthest end of the universe.”

Because he shone so much in his motherland and his city, the fame of his wisdom-loving soul spread all over the universe. Some would contend that this is not true. Yet God willed that he distinguished himself even in the foreign land so that the praise he received was confirmed and the locals became preachers who sang the praises of the exiled and tormented foreign prisoner. Often, as they brought to him their children who suffered from all kinds of illnesses, carrying them in their hands, they came back watching their offspring walking on their own feet, freed from the heavy chains of sickness. Those he cured sounded like trumpets his healing gifts. Also, many of the distinguished wives of the rulers of that land came to him and he guided them on the path of piety. For their part, through his prayers they reached out to their husbands, and led them to him [while] he [led them] to Christ. They offered him much gold and asked him to accept it for it was necessary the security of his life. Yet even on such occasions he built for them a stairway to Heaven, advising them to give [it] away with their hands to the poor. And when one of them asked him: “But who, oh Lord, is poorer than you and who needs alms more than you, broken that you are by old age and sickness and by the torments of the infidels?” He, looking meekly, for the free soul cannot have an angry gaze, wispered with a smile on his lips: “My wealth, child, is hidden here,” and he showed them the Gospels, “and will be revealed when the One who bequeathed it to us calls us to account of what we have gained through it. And it belongs not to me alone but to all who love God.”

Oh, blessed and apostolic voice! Oh, worthy answer of the noble soul! Such was the wisdom of our father in the foreign land. Under persecution and in exile, he cared for one thing: the salvation of humankind. He led to Christ the perfect provinces, cities, villages, and peoples. That is why our praise should end here, for God Himself praises him, saying: “The good shepherd will give up his soul for his sheep.” Paul too wove a wreath for him when he said: “That’s the kind of high priest we needed!”

Let, therefore, my sermon about Euthymius stop here, where he ended his life or, better, his suffering, and began the life in Christ. Let us all be rewarded with that life through our Lord Jesus Christ’s grace and love of man! To Him, to His Father without beginning and to His most Holy and life-giving Spirit, glory, honor, power, and worship now, forever, and for all ages! Amen!

Gregory Tsamblak, account of the translatio of the relics of St Petka from Tarnov to Vidin and Serbia (excerpts). 149

The relics of St Petka were transported from Vidin to Belgrade after the conquest of Sratsimir’s vasa1 principality, most likely in 1397, on the request of Princess Militsa, the widow of Prince Lazar, and her sons Vuk and Despot Stephen. They remained there until 1521, when the Ottomans took Belgrade as well. Unlike Ioasaph of Vidin, Tsamblak wrote the account of the *translatio* (probably after 1402 but no later than 1405 when Militsa died) not to supplant but to update the *Life* of the saint by his master, Euthymius. The account was appended to the *Life* and is known in dozens of manuscripts. Editions: Ka1u1zniacki, *Aus der panegyrischen Literatur der S1udslawen*, 432–36; *BSM*, 136–40.

Then, after many years, when the Bulgarian tsar did not expect it,¹⁹³ the people lived in peace, and piety grew through the prayers of the venerable mother, [Satan] who at first pretended to be the defender of peace stirred up an incredible storm and tempest. He urged the barbarian tsar¹⁹⁴ against that most famous city.¹⁹⁵ On his arrival [he] occupied the Bulgarian territories as if they were an [empty] bird’s nest. Standing before the marvelous city, he wondered how to seize it,

¹⁹³ Ioan Shishman (1371–1395) must have been well aware of what was in store for him after the incursion of Ali Pasha in northeastern Bulgaria in 1388 and the imposition of Ottoman sovereignty over his domain.

¹⁹⁴ Bayazid I Ildirim (1389–1402).

¹⁹⁵ The capital Tarnov.

for he saw that it was a tough place, surrounded by steep mountain slopes and high hills fortified with formidable ramparts and from the inside strengthened with the most honorable relics of the venerable. The latter stood in the midst of the people who lived there like an invincible warrior. For this reason the barbarian tsar [despaired] and wished to turn back without success. He could have breached the walls, but against the fortress of the venerable he would have been as successful as hay against fire. Like Moses and Jeremiah he heard “Do not pray for these people” or “Leave this city, for your prayers defend it against my wrath like a copper wall!”¹⁹⁶

And yet—oh such sorrowful tale to tell!—when sin prevailed, all of a sudden [he] saw what he thought he would never have falling in his hands. And then what happened? If I were to tell all that happened then to you, my beloved, I know it for sure that I would cause you grief and tears. On account of this feast day we will spare the tale, useful as it is for lamentation [only]. When all things of value in the city were brought before the face of the tsar, so was the most honorable body of the venerable, stripped of its most precious attire and wrapped up in a cheap rag-tag outfit.

Having requested it, the tsar who reigned [together with his father] in the city of Vidin on the river Danube transported it there.¹⁹⁷ However, even in Vidin it did not remain long. Later, when the king of Hungary¹⁹⁸ and the armies subject to his power crossed the Danube, took Vidin, and reached to Nicopol, the barbarian commander left Byzantium, with which he was engaged in a bitter conflict, and with great speed turned on the Hungarians. A battle was fought, he defeated them utterly, and the better part of the [crusading] army was forced to drawn in the river.¹⁹⁹ Puffed up on account of his victories, the Ishmaelite went to the city of Vidin, shackled the tsar [Sratsimir] who went out to meet him without fear, trusting his safe-conduct, and sent him to Brusa. He seized his uncountable wealth and transported it to his home.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Deuteronomy 9:18 and Jeremiah 1:18.

¹⁹⁷ Constantine, the son and co-ruler of Ioan Sratsimir of Vidin, who visited Tarnov some time after the fall of the city in 1393 to acquire the relics of St Philothea and apparently took the relics of St Petka as well.

¹⁹⁸ Sigismund (1387–1436), king of Hungary and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire; the expedition is the crusade of Nicopolis.

¹⁹⁹ On September 25, 1396.

²⁰⁰ The deposition of Ioan Sratsimir occurred some time after September 1396; it has been argued that his occurred no earlier than 1397 and that his son remained in power until the revolt of 1407.

While all this was taking place, it happened that there were the most virtuous princess of the Serbian land, the spouse of the holy Prince Lazar of blessed memory,²⁰¹ who had come to see the tsar with her two children, Despot Stephen and Vuk, and Euthymia, the spouse of the great and bravest Despot Uglesha,²⁰² [a woman] adorned with many virtues and good deeds and surpassing many with her wisdom and sharpness of the mind. Having gathered courage, together they requested from the [barbarian] tsar neither the city, nor its district, nor wealth, nor something of the kind that brings small and temporary pleasure but eternal perdition. On the contrary, seized by fervent love, they fell down [on their knees] before the tsar, begging for the imperishable relics of the venerable mother. He, smirking, said: “Why don’t you ask for something precious that has value instead of these dry and petrified bones?” And they, showing the God-loving and God-blessed desire of their meek souls, responded by offering this: “We are ready to offer, should you wish so, and exchange all of our wealth for the relics we now request.” He praised their zeal, for virtue makes even the tormentors marvel, and handed over what they desired. They embraced it and kissed it as if their hearts and souls could reach it through their eyes, shed tears for joy, lauded it kneeling before it and delighting beyond measure in the precious casket. In the end, having prepared the saint with precious oils and gold-woven garbs, they solemnly took it to their land, priding themselves on it and rejoicing that they had obtained a treasure more valuable than the entire world.

And they, the wisest women, were not mistaken in this. [The relics] were placed in the holy church in their palace. They guard them against evils for what is done to honor the servant goes to the divine image and they, sustained by sweet hopes, grew ever more in the spirit. We do hope that they will reign together with her because together did they take mercy of her and delivered her from the hands of the invader. It was, in fact, God’s will, but they took proper care. “He led,” is it said, “His people, but through the hands of Moses and Aaron.” God safeguarded the relics of the venerable from the rage of the barbarians through the zeal and diligence of these God-pleasing and most praised men. Do not chide me for assigning to female weakness a male name, for what

²⁰¹ Princess Militsa, the widow of Prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic.

²⁰² Despot Uglesha perished together with his brother King Vukashin at the battle of Chernomen in 1371.

counts is not the nature of the sex but the strenght and courage²⁰³ of the mind. Anna, Judith, and Deborah should be counted among the men for they performed miracles that conquered tsardoms and put impious tsars to shame.

Their entire land is now bright and much honored. It is now beautified with all kinds of things and surpasses all tsardoms from the East to the ocean of the West. For as soon as they arrived, the Ishmaelites conquered them all so that one could hardly take a breather. They destroyed piety and slayed their tsars and princes. Rarely, and with difficulty, is there a church or a priest to be found: and if so, the temple would be hidden below ground. However here, under these God-crowned lords, even though they were attacked many times by them and despoiled like a vineyard not once a year but every day and hour, they live protected by God through the prayers of the venerable, rule over their [people] as they had from the beginning, multiply piety, and breed virtue. Tell me, in what land, in what city, are there so many monasteries, and great and famous at that? Where are there so many monks to be seen, surpassing all numbers and living the angelic and unmarried life? Some are in the monasteries, beholding the same, thinking about the same, breathing the same, and with the commitment they had all taken serve themselves and are an urge for virtue. Others, residing in the heaven of silence, fulfill God's will like seraphs, living and delighting in the spirit and multiplying their prayers on behalf of the rulers. Where are there so many high priests? Where is there so much diligence on behalf of God and the divines? Where is there so much faithfulness among the people, the rulers and the commoners? Nowhere else but here, where the [venerable] found her rest. The Ruler of all of us took from her the Bulgarian glory but gave her the glory of Serbia instead; nothing of the former remained.

This is how the mother worthy of praise was transported. God did it on purpose so that by her arrival this western [land of Serbia] becomes enlightened and better instructed in goodness.

150 *Gregory Tsamblak, Life of King Stephen Dechanski (excerpts).*

The life and reign of King Stephen Urosh III Dechanski (1321–1331) were relatively short but turbulent. The young prince Urosh (Stephen was the Serbian dynastic name) began his political career in 1293–1294 as a hostage at the court of the Mongol lord Nogai. Shortly after returning to Serbia in 1298

²⁰³ The text uses “virility.”

he married the daughter of the Bulgarian Tsar Smilets and became embroiled in a bitter conflict with his father, King Urosh II Milutin (1282–1321). Milutin ordered him blinded (the order was not carried out thoroughly) and exiled to Constantinople (1313–1321). He was recalled in 1321, overcame his brother Constantine in a short war, and took over the realm. The two most significant achievements of his reign were the founding of the monastery of Dechani, one of the greatest Serbian foundations, and the defeat of the Bulgarian Tsar Michael Shishman at the battle of Velbuzhd in 1330. His life ended tragically. His son, the future king and Tsar Stephan Dushan (1331–1355), had him strangled in 1331. In the 1340s Dushan authorized his father's canonization. A short *Life* was composed before 1355 by a partisan of Dushan's and the cult of Stephen Dechanski spread. Tsamblak wrote his *Life* in the first decade of the fifteenth century, most likely in 1406–1408, combining the factuality of traditional Serbian royal *Lives* with the Bulgarian trend to idealize the ruler. The artistic arsenal of the literary school of Tarnov was skillfully employed by Tsamblak to paint the exquisite image of the perfect Orthodox ruler: a humble king, a hesychast by conviction, a prudent statesman, and an avid supporter of the Church. Edition: Angel Davidov, Georgi Danchev, Nevena Doncheva-Panajotova, Penka Kovacheva, and Tatjana Gencheva, eds., *Žitije na Stephan Dechanski ot Grigorij Tsamblak* (Sofia, 1983).

Life and deeds of the holy and great martyr Tsar Stephan of Serbia who is in Dechani, written by Gregory, monk and presbyter, abbot of the same foundation.

He hailed from the great and most glorious Serbian people, which not only better other nations in the profession of arms and surpass them in wealth, in the beauty of their nature, and in their greatness, but adorn themselves and are famous on account of their most pious and prudent tsars as well, and are greatly devoted to them. That is what we gather from a survey of their reigns. The root of their dynasty and the reason for their supremacy is the trice-great Simeon;²⁰⁴ Simeon, who with his reign pleased the Tsar [of Tsars], Simeon, who forsook the heights of rulership and fell in love with the greatness of monasticism, Simeon, the loyal soldier of the Great Commander, who did not get tied up with the bonds of this life but pleased the Commander, Simeon, friend of the one who received God and who was, I think, even greater, because the servants of the Grace are so much higher than the priests of the Law as the Grace is greater than the shadow of the Law.²⁰⁵ This Simeon,

²⁰⁴ The Serbian ruler Nemanja (1165–1196), the founder of the late medieval Serbian ruling dynasty. He abdicated in 1196, donned the habit under the name Simeon, and was canonized after his death in 1199.

²⁰⁵ Tsamblak juxtaposes the Old and the New Testament.

therefore, the meek root, left behind enough heirs, each of whom took over the reins of power when his time came. They did not disturb the Church with heretical teachings and pagan sacrifices or with false doctrines like the sons of Constantine the Great, but ruled piously and wisely, pleasing God and governing the army and the flock with which they had been entrusted....

Milutin, the fourth after the great Simeon, gave birth to Stephen, the pillar of true piety and wreath of the realm.²⁰⁶ For many years he grew and came of age kind and gentle to everyone, instructed himself in fear of God and through Him steered clear of any evil. Since his youth this man was in possession of many virtues. He was soft-spoken and respectful to his interlocutors and merciful toward the suffering. He was so much disgusted with pride that he did not want to even look at such people. His kindheartedness attracted everyone's heart and mind. He had made the Almighty his helper and kept his gaze fixed on Him.

But how did he get in trouble? The devil, who always detests any good thing, stirred up envy. For such a task a woman is always his servant. Oh, tears of mine! If female lust overcame the wisdom of our forefather in Paradise, would it not accomplish her desires now? Listen: The queen came to the tsar²⁰⁷ with a sad face, suddenly and not according to custom, suffused in tears and speaking in a low and uneven voice, as if spurred on by internal fire. To cut the long story short, she pushed the father to blind his first-born son, the son who resembled Isaac in obedience and pious submission. He was not ignorant of the plot. Many princes and notables talked to him in secret and urged him to gather his troops and secede with a part of the realm and thus escape the conspiracy against himself; some even advised him to assume full royal power. But he did not wish to listen to them because he figured God would take good care of him as He did of everyone who counted on his love of humanity. He believed in justice and truth and fortified himself with prayer and alms, speaking this: "Ruler of all things and God Creator of all things visible and invisible! You know the hearts of Thee creatures, Thou knows all things before they even existed. Human thought confesses to Thee and its trail is clearly visible

²⁰⁶ Urosh II Milutin (1282–1321).

²⁰⁷ Tsamblak uses the title "tsar" anachronistically; it was not before Stephen Dushan's reign, in 1346, that the Serbian rulers acquired and kept it to 1355. Urosh Milutin and Stephen Dechanski were kings.

to Thee. Look into my heart and see if there is any injustice in it, see if the way to lawlessness is in me. Thou, who judge justly hearts and minds,²⁰⁸ see if there is any truth in what they accuse me and pass Thee just sentence. Thou, who in “Esther” calmed down the wrath of Asuir, the Median tsar, pacify the parental heart that had been so cruelly and unjustly stirred up against me; transform raising fury into the pity of mercifulness. Save me, all-seeing Lord, for I am in trouble and will soon be subjected to unjust sentencing. Lead my father away from this sinful and shameful deed. Much-praised Tsar, Thee power sets free those put in chains and Thee right hand is the strongest!”

This was the way in which the dignified Stephen revealed, to God only, the disturbance of his heart and placed unto Him his hope for deliverance. In court he behaved in a dignified and respectful manner and demonstrated to everyone his naturally kind demeanor. Before his father he appeared in a truly humble and appropriate manner. But the power of Providence did not heed this so that, after he was tested through the unjust wound he, whose efforts and labors on behalf of truth cannot be compared to anyone else’s, got to be crowned by the life-giving hand with the wreath of righteousness.

What happened next? A sorrowful story worthy of tears. Female lust prevailed, royal wisdom was overcome by female cunning, fatherly firmness gave way to female weakness, and a shameless woman put out parental warmth. The righteous was unjustly seized and the meek and merciful—because of evil slander, mercilessness, and shamelessness—was deprived of sight. But let no one who hears these words think about praising Stephen while using them to dishonor the other,²⁰⁹ the holy and praiseworthy man! For we consider his father a pious soldier of our Orthodox faith, one is among the saints. We bow down to his incorruptible relics preserved by God and kiss them to receive enlightenment. We beg him to intercede for us before the Lord for his many virtues give him courage to do it. We exposed the compact between the devil and the female. Indeed, he is not fully blameless for he listened to her and gave over to the court of injustice his first-born of the likes of whom Solomon said: “The wise son is the joy of his father.”²¹⁰ But those who reason correctly would not blame him even

²⁰⁸ Jeremiah 11:20.

²⁰⁹ Urosh Milutin.

²¹⁰ Proverbs 10:1, 15:20.

for that. Because even Constantine, the first and greatest Christian tsar, so great in natural and inborn piety and prudence, trusted the false words of a deceitful woman and killed his son Priscus, a good and meek man, and then, having realized that she had lied to him, tried her justly and had her killed.

Do you see, my beloved, the woman's cunning? Do you hear how easily one falls for her deceptions? Why did not Constantine, God-enlightened and most prudent man that he was, expose her evil deed before the murder of his son? Because, had he known, he would not have sentenced his beloved but her, through whom the devil spoke. He found out the truth only belatedly when repentance was of no use for he was not able to bring his son back to life; he was not able to see clearly from the beginning for his mind's eye was obscured by the fraudulent words of the evil woman. Only after the murder did he realize what he had done. Adam suffered in the same way, for he knew that obedience was good because the Creator had commanded it while disobedience was evil. Adam was a most wise man, marvelous creature of the divine hands honored with a prudent and speech-endowed soul, and he knew how to tell apart good from evil. That is why the counselor of evil first captured woman and through woman he made Adam touch the forbidden tree. What they knew instinctively from the beginning, that disobedience was evil, they now turned into practice, taking the evil advice. Those proficient in the scriptures know about many other examples and can bring them up, but now let our account go back to the story.

And so, Stephan was subjected to this cruel and heart-breaking blinding. The place where that happened was called Ovche Polje and there was a temple of Christ's great high priest Nicholas there. Pierced by cruel pain, the sufferer lay like dead, fully exhausted. Toward the end of the night he fell into an uneasy sleep. He saw a man who stood resplendent before him, adorned with the vestment of the saints, the light of grace shining from his face. He held out two gorged eyes in his right hand and spoke: "Stephen, do not grieve: look, here on my hand I have your eyes!" And he showed them to him. He, in his deam, asked: "Who are you, my lord, to take such a care of me?" The apparition replied: "I am Nicholas, the bishop of Mirilikia." When he woke up, Stephen offered his humble heart's thanks to God and his chosen one and felt that his pain diminished somewhat.

Thereafter, he was sent to the City of Constantine and exiled there with his two children, which were still toddlers. The reigning Andronicos

Palaeologos ordered him to reside in the foundation of God Lord of Everyone.²¹¹ The tsar ordered that no one talked to him except the abbot of the foundation and those who had his special permission. The honorable lived in this manner, enduring manfully the sorrows of exile and constantly repeating to himself: “Patience, Stephen! The Lord said: “Patience will save your souls.”²¹² The Wisdom says it too: “He tested them through injuries like gold in the smelting pot and accepted them like a rich sacrifice.” And he did not cease to offer thanks, recalling the apostle who said: “Be thankful!” He prayed often and fell on his knees many times. When the brothers gathered to pray and sing together he was the first to show up and stood through the end without moving so that the abbot and the brothers wondered at his diligence and attentiveness. For this he was even more loved and pitied by everyone. They took care of him and conversed with him often thus benefiting not a little, for he discussed with them much of what the scriptures had to say about abstinence. He pointed as an example the apostle Paul, who teaches that this world’s sufferings are nothing compared to the glory that God will reveal to us and that although our outward humanity decays, day by day we get inwardly renewed.²¹³ Thinking what would benefit the brothers that came to him he uttered words of humility and instruction; he brushed aside his own suffering to help them bear lightly the burden of ascetism. This did not remain unknown to the sovereign: he heard about the praiseworthy life of the man. He marveled and seized by love for him he often invited him to himself, in the tsar’s palace, to discuss with him what was useful and beneficial to the soul, and to have lunch with him. Such is the power of virtue: it attracts to itself those who love the good and those infused with hatred it makes go away in shame.

Then the enemy, who often disturbs the Church with heresies, could not bear to see the Church at peace and Christ’s flock grazing on the fields of piety. He stirred up a certain Barlaam, founder of the heresy of Akindin. He brought much trouble to the church for he had many fellow-travellers or, to put it better, fellows in perdition, and disciples who listened to his improper and seditious doctrines. . . . Riots

²¹¹ Andronikos II Palaeologos (1282–1328), whose daughter Simonida was Urosh Milutin’s wife. The monastery is Christ Pantocrator, one of the most renowned foundations in the capital.

²¹² After Luke 21:19.

²¹³ 2 Corinthians 4:16.

and disturbances and calumnies spread all over the imperial City: some joined the speakers of evil while others opposed and exposed them. . . .²¹⁴

While all this was taking place the tsar, as was his custom, called for Stephen to be brought to him. After they exchanged many words pertaining to the salvation of the soul and to imperial rule, the God-inspired Stephen spoke this: "Oh powerful tsar, it appears to me that you please God, the Tsar of Tsars in everything: with your imperial governance, with the administrative and military order of the realm, with your meekness, humility, justice, and truth. Truly, you surpass in wisdom all of the tsars who have ruled before you. But there is one thing, oh crowned by God, in which it seems to me that you are in the wrong. It is the true wreath of the tsardom and the head of the universe. For its sake the apostles crisscrossed the universe and joined humanity to the true faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; for its sake the martyrs did not spare their flesh and blood. I am talking about piety." The tsar replied: "And where do you think we err in piety? Speak up, oh most perfect among our friends and brothers!" Stephen spoke: "Tsar, it is well known that if the shepherd does not notice that the wolf has crept among the sheep and does not drive it away he too is a beast, even though he might be called shepherd. Because the name does not make the deed, but deeds make a name glorious. Reasonable men consider those who leave the speakers of evil in peace and do not drive them away speakers of evil themselves. It is not righteous nor proper, oh most enlightened among rulers, that you who have been honored with a tsar's throne and have been placed by Christ to be the shepherd of such a numerous flock, to keep His enemies among your sheep; you must drive them away like the soul-preying wolves that they are and sing along with David: "Lord, I hated those who hated You and ruined myself to rid You of Your enemies. I hated them so much: they are my enemies."²¹⁵ By no means should you allow them to reside within the boundaries of the country entrusted to you by God. If you only do that, you will put an end to the calumnies in the Church and will grant the Orthodox [people] profound peace; you will raise the scepter of the tsardom and will be true tsar of true Christians. Like

²¹⁴ Another of Tsamblak's anachronisms aiming to glorify Stephen. The teachings of Barlaam and Akindin were not yet as widespread nor did they clash with the hesychasts during Stephen's exile in Constantinople.

²¹⁵ Psalms 138, 21–22.

the loyal shepherd you will receive the reward of the Supreme Lord: the eternity of the otherworldly tsardom.”

When the autocrator heard these words he marveled at the eloquent speech and wisdom of the man. He thanked him much and praised him, telling his courtiers: “This is a great man, great in wisdom and most prescient on account of his spiritual eyes even though his bodily eyes are closed...”

What followed next? Five years passed since he had been sent there. On the holy feast of the miracle-making father Nicholas the customary all-night vigils were held in the monastery. Many candles were lit up and much incense was burned. Stephen took his appointed place, sighing from the bottom of his soul and praying with broken heart. Then, according to custom, they sat down for the reading of the *Life* and miracles of the great father. Stephen, who was sitting on a chair, felt very tired and dozed off. Presently, he saw with his mind’s eye the divine man who had appeared to him some time ago. He stood before him and spoke: “Do you remember what I told you when I first appeared to you?” [Stephen] seemed to recall himself kneeling on the ground and thought he recognized the great Nicholas, but did not remember what he had been told. The other, merciful as he was, said: “I told you not to grieve for your pupils were in my hands and I showed them to you.” Now he saw a vision: he remembered these words and how he fell at the feet of the saint and begged for mercy. The apparition spoke again: “I have been sent to fulfill what I told you back then.” And he lifted him up, made the sign of the cross over his face touching his eyes with the tips of his fingers, and spoke: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, who granted the light to the one who had been born blind, gived your eyes your former vision.” And he promptly turned invisible while [Stephen] began to tremble. The moment he came to, he was able to see as did before. Oh Christ, who can describe Thee mercy!²¹⁶ Still, he picked up the stick with which he usually walked and went out of the church. When he entered his cell he immediately threw himself on the ground and spent hours on end shedding tears from his newly granted pupils, offering a sacrifice of tears to the One who had given them to him. He

²¹⁶ Stephen was not properly blinded and retained some of his vision, although seriously impaired, but concealed his ability to see. Blindness disqualified him as a potential heir to the throne, and the miraculous regaining of his sight came when he felt confident enough in his chances to return to Serbia and claim the crown.

beat his chest, called himself earth and ashes,²¹⁷ talked that he was not worthy of such mercy but, rather, deserved more grief and suffering. Such are the saints: when they receive the best they think themselves most unworthy. Having shed tears profusely, he covered his eyes with a kerchief, picked up his stick and walked back to the church as he usually did. Being a most wise man, he hid his ability to see from everyone and no one found out about this until the day on which God chose him to reign through the truth and made him the shepherd of his own fatherland, as our story will explain later. Let us continue in an orderly fashion. . . .

The autocrator of the Greeks sent messengers to his son-in-law, the tsar of Serbia, so help him with troops. For at this time the Agarenes, who had conquered all southern provinces, were pushing in great numbers toward the East. The tsar was entirely preoccupied with this and prepared to go to war with the barbarians.²¹⁸ He decided that the abbot of the monastery of Pantocrator should go with the messengers, for he was a prudent man and skillful in other things as well. When they arrived at the Serbian court, as the autocrat had ordered, they honored him and received many presents. The tsar invited the honorable father to see him in private and inquired about his son Stephen. The marvelous father spoke: "Tsar, you are asking me about that great sufferer, that second Job? All the possessions of your tsardom taken together, even if you had the years to enjoy them all, are not worth as much as any of Stephen's torments. He is the most precious treasure of our foundation and the entire glorious imperial City." And he began to tell him about the many accomplishments of the man and about his immaculate life, and how in a most prudent manner he urged the tsar to drive the heretics away. "You should also know," he said, "that his greatest benefit is your greatest loss. And if you would listen to me—and I am giving you this advice for your own good—you would recall with honor the man who is above any human honor."

When the merciful soul heard that it was filled with paternal pity, for such is the bond of blood. It never gets broken (except by death)

²¹⁷ Job 30:19.

²¹⁸ It is not clear whether this information refers to a specific event. The Turkish emirates of Karasi, Aydin, and Mentеше were indeed settling in control of the Aegean coast and Tsamblak might have referred to this as well as the expansion of the Ottomans to the north of them. In any case, after the death of his son Michael IX, Andronicos II had enough trouble with his grandson Andronicos III to need military support.

but grows stronger. [Milutin] shed abundant tears, then got on his feet, bowed down to that man and confessed the advent of grace: “Father, let it be as you say!” he said. He ordered those who were to travel back to Byzantium with the abbot to make haste, and sent them back to the tsar requesting that he returned Stephen to him. The autocrator rejoiced, called him to himself, embraced and kissed him, and sent him away with tears and loaded with presents. He gave away everything he received from the tsar to the monastery where he resided. When he prepared to leave and stood at the foundation’s gate, his beloved abbot and brothers sent him on his way with tears; they felt as if their souls were departing with him. The words of the prophet became true: “The good and the righteous stick with me.” He acknowledged their prayers, left them in peace, and set forth on his way. After a journey of many days he reached his fatherland. As soon as he arrived at the place where the tsar resided he ordered that he was brought to him. The tsar welcomed his beloved son like a true father, offered him words of consolation and humbly begged forgiveness for what he had done to him. And what did the emulator of Christ do? With mild words he calmed his father’s anxiety and blamed himself for what he went through. This is what the servant of God said: “Father, you did what you had been ordered to do. It is not proper or religious not to heed God when He commands us. You would not have been the reason for my birth had He not willed it. That is why, father,” he said, “both of us should give thanks to God who willed to save you through your service to the tsardom and grant me mercy through deprivation of sight.” The tsar marveled at these words. He admired the wisdom of the man and was ashamed at the perception of his incomparable virtue. . . .

Many days later the will of God came to pass and the tsar came suddenly down with a debilitating disease. When he realized that his life was at its end, he ordered to be moved to his monastery where he spent a few days and left this life. They buried him in the monastery he had built, at the place called Banska on account of its warm waters, in the church honored with the name of the first martyr Stephen. While the tsar was on his death bed, many rushed to bring the news to Stephen. However, he thought that this was a trick for he was not inclined to easily believe such tidings, which many believe, being gullible. But when he found out that his father had indeed died, he immediately took off the kerchief from his eyes and with a bright face and even brighter eyes appeared before those who had gathered there and girded himself with the power over the Serbian tsardom, which was worthy of him. As

soon as the rumor spread, the people rushed to him, racing each other. The notables on the council, almost the entire army, the officials, and those who are charged with the collection of taxes, all of them made haste to come to him and fall at his feet and acclaim him as tsar. He embraced all of them, kissed them, and spoke to them wise words for their benefit thus placing in their hearts the foundations of diligence. Their souls loved him and desired him, and a great number of guards stood about his person. . . .

[God], who arranged everything for his benefit chose him a spouse worthy of him because it was good for him to have a helper in his God-pleasing deeds. She, the blessed Palaeologina, came from the city of Thessaloniki to reign [with him] for she too was of royal origins.²¹⁹ To glorify the man who pleased Him, God caused this to pass as well: during his entire reign the earth gave birth to a great abundance of fruit, so that everyone marveled at his country and many left their fatherlands to settle there. The fortunes of Christianity grew, ecclesiastical affairs were steered well, and the affairs of the realm were in good order. The enemies feared to even hear about the army. Stephen himself, famous for his virtue, shone like the sun with the brilliance of his virtuous life. Every soul loved him and every mind marveled at him. He kept busy-ing himself with God-pleasing deeds and distributed alms everywhere like the rays of the sun. These sayings were on his mind: “I require mercy, not sacrifice”²²⁰ and “He who is generous to the poor lends to the Lord.”²²¹ Much was sent to Egypt and Alexandria, to the Holy Mount of Sinai, where God stood in glory, as well as to Jerusalem, Palestine, the City of Constantine (especially the foundation of the Pantocrator), and Thessaly. The Holy Mount of Athos too received a good deal of his munificence. But enough about this.

The divine man was obsessed with a secret desire. Always asking himself in his mind, “How can I repay the Lord for everything He gave me?” he wished to build a temple of Christ Pantocrator as a place to pour in all of his zeal. He went to different places in his country in search of a proper location. [Finally], he came to a place in the region of Hvosteni, called Dechani. He had a good look at it, shed tears of gratitude to God, and spoke to the notables who were with him: “How

²¹⁹ Maria Palaeologina, Stephen’s last spouse, was one of Andronicos II’s grandnieces, the daughter of his nephew John and Irine Metochitos.

²²⁰ Matthew 9:13.

²²¹ Proverbs 19:17.

awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God,” like the prophet Jacob said once.²²² They said: “Oh most holy among the tsars, we have heard it said that the prophet said to God in the psalm of the tsar that He had granted him his heart’s desire and did not spurn the prayer on his lips. Now we understood what that means in reality.” The tsar spoke, rejoicing: “Oh perfect among my God-pleasing friends, what else would I have liked better? This place is worthy of my zeal.” And he promptly commanded that stonecutters were brought there and called on building contractors from the towns of Primorie to come and superwise the construction. His tent was pitched there and he admired the beauty of the place. It was located on a height and was overgrown with all kinds of trees; it was also covered with thick forests, which abounded in all kind of fruit, and it was lush and flat. The sweet waters of springs ran everywhere. A clear river watered it. Its waters delighted the sight even before being tasted; once sipped, it felt like a blessing and one could not get one’s fill of its sweetness. On the western side it was surrounded by high mountains whose steep slopes enclosed it and contributed to its healthy air. On the eastern side it opened to a wide field watered by the same river. Such, then, was the place where the monastery was built and it was proper and praiseworthy.

First, he built a wall, long and wide enough and fortified with thick towers. The main gates faced the entrance side of the church, toward the southern side. He built a high tower over them and its top was as high as the church. The cells of the monks were attached to the wall like birds’ nests to fulfill the words of the prophet: “I was like a bird perched on the roof.” He built a spacious refectory, which the skill of the mason made even larger, and added a sizeable bakery and a kitchen. The rooms of the abbot were a marvelous thing themselves, worthy of separate description! Having built all this according to the requirements of the rule and esthetically pleasing, he covered it with much lead. In the middle of all this Stephen, handsome in God, erected a beautiful church in God’s name. From the inside it was long and wide and so tall that it strained the eye of the beholder. It was supported by marble columns and adorned with all kinds of arches. On the outer side it was admirably covered with marbles of many colours, reds and whites. The slabs were joined in such a marvelous and masterful way that the face of the church appeared to be built of one huge sheet of rock, as

²²² Genesis 28:17.

if the art of the mason fused together the entire face of nature and shone with an indescribable beauty, which enlightened the faces of the beholders. The eternal beauty of stone and the large dimensions of the church gave it the appearance of perfection for it was splendidly built. For lack of time I will not describe its golden and silver vessels, the vestments of the priests, and the pearls- and precious stones-adorned Syrian cloths. . . .

Another feat, however, was in store for the tsar. The Bulgarian Tsar Michael was puffed up by pride in his many achievements and moved against Serbian power, striving to subject it to his power.²²³ His army was large and had auxiliaries from many other peoples. He received considerable assistance from the Goths who live on the other side of the Danube and pressed forward like a stormy sea.²²⁴ Surveying the uncountable multitude, he hastened to turn into reality the designs of his mind. Stephen found out about this from a letter sent to him and, naturally, was much disturbed. He sent messages to gather his army and went ahead himself together with his son Stephen. When he arrived at the place called Velbuzhd, in the province of Sardikia [Sofia] he caught sight of the other side, and they of him. Our people were many times fewer than the others: five to a thousand as the saying goes. . . .²²⁵

He entered his tent, fell on his knees, pressed his face to the ground and began to pray. His tears poured out like a gushing stream. God heard His righteous [servant]. Through his prayer that proud and violent man with all of his military power was vanquished like the ancient Amalek and did not escape the judgment of the Lord.²²⁶ The Bulgarian tsar was captured by Serbian soldiers. They brought him before the tsar's son, Stephen, who accomplished many a fine feat in that battle. He was deprived of his life and honor: he was justly subjected to what

²²³ Michael Shishman Asen (1323–1330). The precise reasons for the war are unclear. The decisive encounter took place at Velbuzhd, today Kjustendil in southwestern Bulgaria, then as now on Bulgarian soil, which means that Stephan Dechanski and his son must have hurried to meet their opponent.

²²⁴ Michael had the support of a number of mercenaries, among them Vlachs, Tatars, and Ossetians. Tsamblak lumps them together in the anachronistic “Goths,” an approach typical of the Byzantine literature of the time.

²²⁵ The armies were in fact comparable in size. The Serbians had several hundreds of Catalan mercenaries on their side under the command of Stephen Dushan. Writing the *Life* of a Serbian saint for Serbians, Tsamblak fully identifies with the Serbian cause.

²²⁶ Exodus 17–18.

he prepared for others.²²⁷ The shamed Bulgarians lost most of their troops, took up Michael's dead body and after performing the usual rites prepared him according to custom. Then they put in power Alexander, [Stephen's] nephew, and went back to their country....²²⁸

However Stephen, his above-mentioned son, was burning in desire for the tsardom. He feared he will not inherit it; it was as if a snake was hidden in him. Not being able to put out any longer the burning flame of that desire he gathered around himself a sizable army and many of the foremost notables and crossed over in the land of Albania where he assumed the rank of tribune.²²⁹ He girded himself with the power over the entire realm and separated that land from his father's domain....

Then he who was at the same time a son and a traitor found appropriate time and suddenly fell upon his father, seized him with his wife and children, and ordered that they were put in custody in another town while he was sent to the town called Zvechan. A few days afterwards he sentenced him to unjust death by strangulation. Oh, merciless sentence! Oh merciless answer!²³⁰ He did not pity his father's body and did not spare paternal old age! Why was he not ashamed of [his father's] white hairs? Why did he not remember God, who says in the Law: "Honor your father and your mother?"²³¹ And how did the most evil servants of the evil master dare advance after receiving such an order, proceeding with careless steps? While on their way, how did they not feel any pity? Once they arrived, how did they dare gaze at that holy and beautiful face? How did they have the nerve to touch his holy neck with their polluted hands? Oh, dishonor! Oh, hatred without bounds! Why did their wicked hands not wither? Why did their eyes

²²⁷ Michael Shishman was severely wounded in the battle. He died of his wounds several days later and was buried in the church of St George at Staro Nagorichino in the district of Kumanovo.

²²⁸ Stephen made sure that the defeated Bulgarians will be on friendly terms with the victors: the new Bulgarian tsar, here referred to as Alexander, took the name Ioan Stephen (1330–1331) for he was his nephew. His reign was as short as the Serbian influence over Bulgaria. Less than a year later, in 1331, he was overthrown in a coup which brought to power Ioan Alexander Asen (1331–1371), and which might have been timed to coincide with Stephen Dushan's coup d'état against his father.

²²⁹ The meaning of this term in the text is not clear. Stephen was not "born in purple," that is, after his father took power, and he might have felt urged to act lest Dechanski's younger children bypass him.

²³⁰ To Stephen's missives asking for peace.

²³¹ Exodus 20:12.

not go blind, as the writings of many saints report it happening? Well, how else would the end of the martyr come if not in that way? For the destiny of martyrdom is one even though there are many ways to die. And so, he yielded up his blessed soul to God. Angels lifted it up with praises while his much-suffered and honorable body was transported to his monastery, where it was honored most appropriately and copiously with sublime and holy rites. Then the treasure, like a certain sun setting down, was given over to the unforgiving grave.

However, enough of those things. As for myself, oh holy gathering of most pure fathers, I did not think that [such feats] should be buried in the darkness of forgetfulness but that they should be revealed and offered to your ears, for you are Christ-loving and martyrs-loving [men] and it is not meet that such great treasures are diminished in an account of a few sentences...²³²

151 *Constantine of Kostenets, Life of Despot Stephen Lazarevic, early fifteenth century (excerpts).*

The *Life* of Despot Stephen is perhaps the most brilliant example of the fifteenth-century Bulgarian and Balkan hagiography. It combines the style and exclusivity of the hagiographic school perfected by Euthymius with the rich tradition of Serbian royal *Lives*. The subject matter of the *Life* is a worthy one: controversial as he might be, Despot Stephan Lazarevic (r. 1389–1427) is without doubt the most prominent Serbian ruler of the later medieval period. A skillful politician, talented general, generous giver to religious foundations, and a courtly benefactor to the Balkan literati who flocked to his court as the Ottoman conquest went on he stood out among his contemporaries. He was also the most prominent patron of Constantine, who made the court of Belgrade his second home. The exiled Bulgarian was selected by Patriarch Nikon (1420–1435) to write the *Life* of the Despot. After four years of hesitation Constantine completed it in 1431. In style and content, the *Life* is a veritable historical chronicle of Balkan political history of the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and often supplies otherwise unknown information. The excerpts translated here are samples of the various kinds of material that Constantine skillfully wove into the *Life*. Editions: Vatroslav Jagic, “Konstantin Filosof i njegov zivot Stefana Lazarevica despota srpskog” *Glasnik srpskog ucenog drustva* vol. 42 (1876), 223–328 and 372–77 (full version according to the Tsetinje MS and variants according to the Bogishevich MS); Ž. Milisavac, ed., *Stara srpska književnost*. Vol. III. *Žitije Despota Stefana Lazarevića* (Belgrade and Novi Sad, 1970); Kujo Kuev, Georgi Petkov, *Sabrani sachinenija na Konstantin Kostenecki. Izsledvane i text* (Sofia, 1986), 361–429 (full version according to the Bogishevich MS) and 472–515 (short version according to the Pogodin MS).

²³² Tsamblak refers to the earlier *Short Life* of Stephen Dechanski.

Life and deeds of the always remembered, famous, and pious lord of Serbia, Despot Stephen, written on the order and at the instigation of the most holy patriarch of the Serbian land and high priest of the court Lord Nikon, and inspired by the vision and trice-holy appearance of the one with the same name²³³ who announced his accent to this...

Let us begin, therefore, with his native place and how he lived and what is the country like in which he was raised... He hailed from the country of Dalmatia, that is Dacia, the land of the so-called nowadays Serbians, where in recent times many flourished of whose genealogy there will be a word later. Like the Promised Land, that country is not only a land of milk and honey but it is as if it gathers together the four seasons and the air and sends them out to other lands. Because one cannot find throughout the universe another land where all goods have been gathered together; one can find one thing here and another there, east and west, north and south, as the geographers explain and as we have witnessed it. However, this country not only overflows with goods but, according to some geographers sends air westwards and toward the Hellespont. The day here lasts fifteen hours and once these are gone, the surplus goes north, east, or south, where days are shorter; it is like an end zone, the root of all goods, desired and chosen. Because one cannot say, for example, that the countries in the south, where at harvest time there is darkness for forty days and nights, are chosen, or the countries of the north where, similarly, there is light for forty days and nights, or the lands covered with snow, or the arid lands, or other lands, which according to Job are not populated. But this land, without doubt, has the gentlest air and the most balanced combination of everything.

Because a tree is known by its fruit and a man by his deeds let us show what this land is by her fruit and their deeds. First of all, let us mention what is most necessary: gold, and with it silver, as well as the fact that mines here are rich and abundant and the more they are mined the more they yield, like the springs whose water, the more one drinks from it, the sweeter it becomes. Where, east or west, can such riches be found? Verily, nowhere. To cut the long story short and avoid boredom it is enough to point out the reason [for her wealth].

Also, vineyards are planted here more than in any other place and without much toil, and grain abounds, as do gardens and orchards.

²³³ Reference to St Stephen, Despot Stephen's patron.

Springs, wells, and rivers complement one another here, districts match in beauty and vie with one another in loveliness and fruitfulness. And when the country casts out winter and cold weather and comes closer to summer, the air becomes so wholesome and beautiful that one can say that in truth they have seen true abundance, and a better thing cannot be seen anywhere else.

It is necessary to mention the birds as well and everything else that God has given, such as greenery and food for humans: in this too, there is such an abundance here that cannot be found anywhere else. Abundant food is provided by all places, more or less populated, and there is a plenty of all kinds of fruit, fish, and everything that men need and that God has given to the people to delight in everything that the Creator put under their power.

If someone asks how the country is protected [let us answer that] it is defended by very tall mountains and cities comparable to which there are only a few in other countries. The latter are distinguished by the height of their strongholds and are well supplied with waters that ensure joy in the cities.

One should not gloss over the greatest and much-described deed of God, which the great Moses did not forget in the book of the creation of the world, namely the river Phison, as the geography books call it. This river is also called Ister and Gaz, and Ister and Danube by the Thracians. It comes out of Paradise and travels deep down under the earth, and then springs out in the West, close to the mountains of Peonia²³⁴ which stretch from the Sicilian Sea²³⁵ to the Germans and the Northern Ocean. From there Phison turns east and empties in the Euxinian Pont²³⁶ in five branches. As it flows eastwards, it has the Czechs on its northern and western side, divides Hungary in two, and waters the excellent Serbian land, they goes by the Bulgarians and the Vlachs, and reaches the so-called Black Sea. One has to keep in mind that God, according to His decision, sent out from Paradise the four great rivers of the universe and the western parts²³⁷ were destined to have one of them. For Gion²³⁸ flows in Egypt, one of his sources is in Lybia and the other two in Upper Etiopia. As they come together,

²³⁴ The Alps.

²³⁵ The Adriatic Sea.

²³⁶ The Black Sea.

²³⁷ Europe.

²³⁸ The Nile.

its waters raise and water Egypt during the month of August. The Egyptians call it *istapie* which means “water from the darkness.” As for Tigris and Euphrates, they are born as a fruit of Paradise, then flow underground and appear again at the mountain of Taurus. The current of the Euphrates is clear as it descends from north to south, approaches the Persian Ocean,²³⁹ makes depressions and lakes, and disappears in them. Tigris springs out, almost invisibly, from a lake out east, flows southwards, crosses over the Trickonian mountain at the Massagetae, joins the Euphrates, divides Babylon in two, comes out close to Peridon and flows into the Persian Gulf. Before it joins the Euphrates, while the two rivers flow separately, they form Mesopotamia, four hundred and twenty eight *stadia* in length. As for Physon, the book of Genesis [says that it] surrounds the land of Ebilat and from there comes to us. There is, it is said, gold of good quality there. For this reason it was necessary that one of the rivers flowed westward and brought its great bounties here.

Another of the thirty six great rivers of the universe also flows here. Its name is Sava and it is like a frontier for the two countries.²⁴⁰ It joins the Physon at the most beautiful place, where it comes out in three branches to form two islands and where the famous city of Belgrade is located, as the description will show later.

Now [let us] look at the people, the last and most honorable creature of God, so that no one thinks that I am heaping praises on something without soul and feelings. Indeed, the best land gives birth to the best wheat, returning thirty, sixty, or a hundred grains. [The people of Serbia] are so valiant that the entire universe speaks of them; and according to Solomon there are none among men more honest than them. They are very good in obedience. There are no better than them in the entire universe: when it is necessary, they are quick to obey and slow to talk. But when they are challenged, they quickly respond to the one who asks, handling weapons with both hands. They surpass all other nations in bodily cleanliness as they do in their bright and pure blood. Besides, they are merciful and amicable. If some of them fell on hard times in reference to necessary things, the others will give him everything he needed, and not only to individual persons, but to everyone and at all times. It not just giving something, but double alms,

²³⁹ The Persian Gulf.

²⁴⁰ Serbia and Hungary.

as in the words of Solomon: “Whoever honors the poor gives alms.” Life in that land is like in the church of God. [They] do not live here as others do, in a bestial manner and against nature, but the hour does not pass without them mentioning the name of God, and it is the custom of both great and small [to pray] more than two times per day. It is considered a sign of dignity for the son, even in his own house, to stand before his parents like a servant. This can be seen among the wealthiest as well as among the most destitute. Has anyone ever heard that some of them had saddened his mother or father? Indeed, this never happens. Living in Christ according to the law, they honor one another, call one another lord and uncover their head, as it once was the custom in the southern lands. . . .

When Orhan died his youngest son, Amurat, who conquered many of the Western lands, sat on the throne.²⁴¹ He then armed himself against the pious Prince Lazar. The latter could not bear to wait and see his and even more so Christ’s limbs [i.e. his subjects] abandoned, cut down, and cut off, stirred himself and set off against the Ishmaelites, spurred by the thought to either wipe clean the shame or die himself the death of a martyr in the attempt. The battle occurred at the place called Kossovo and unfolded in this manner. The soldiers were in battle array under the banners. Among them there was a very noble man, Milosh, who out of envy had been falsely accused before the prince of having been a traitor. To prove his loyalty and courage he found an appropriate time and rode straight toward the leading commander [of the enemy] as if we wanted to desert, and was allowed to pass. When he came close, he at once pulled out his sword and stabbed this proud and terrible sovereign, but was himself cut down on the spot. Those who came with Lazar began to have the upper hand, but the battle was not over yet. The son of that tsar²⁴² rallied the troops and won the victory because God allowed it so that the great [prince] and those with him got crowned with the wreaths of martyrdom. What happened after that? The end of the blessed Lazar came and his head was cut off. His beloved comrades went ahead of him, for they humbly asked to die before him and spare themselves the sight of his death.

²⁴¹ The Ottoman Beys Orkhan (1324–1359) and Murad I (1362–1389); the latter took the title Sultan in 1383.

²⁴² Sultan Bayazid I Ildirim (1389–1402).

This battle at which he died a martyr's death occurred on June 15, 6897 [1389]. I see him, as if alive, in the great monastery of Ravanitsa, which he built himself, [together] with those at whose hands he suffered death and those with whom he rejoices in the heavens. There was no place in that land where the loud shrieks and sorrowful sounds of weeping, such as had never been heard before, did not fill the air. Rachel wept and refused to be comforted:²⁴³ not only for her children but for this God-chosen lord as well because neither they nor he were any more. . . .

[The Despot] therefore, was diligent in everything although still very young and was guided by piety. Every day he demonstrated, in his speech and with his deeds that he strove to advance. . . .

Being a child, he looked at the church and said: "I will build even stronger and more beautiful foundations." He spoke in a similar way about battles and uttered other such words as if prophesying. In everything he touched, in every type of knowledge in the field of divine or human wisdom, he quickly showed himself better than his tutors. As for his skills and feats in competitions with weapons, something many cannot master, he was always the best, setting examples from which the others learned. He was more than perfect in all these things and shone among his peers with his strength and the beauty of his body like the sun against the backdrop of the stars. . . .

When he came of age he consigned to the past familial affairs as if casting a cover over them, and added even greater feats to his great accomplishments. If someone else had been deemed worthy of such honors, he would have fallen prey to earthly desires and imagined that he was the greatest. This one not only did not give in to such temptations but, even though he was in possession of enormous power, did not abandon anything that is useful. He was firm in avoiding what displeases God. This is something so difficult for those in power that even angels marveled. He never went astray from the tsar's road, the straight road.

He conducted his affairs clothed, as it were, in his mother's prayers. Inheriting his father's dignity, he showed himself the most prudent manager of everything. But before he had a chance to bring everything to completion the devil, the primordial sower of weeds, stirred up to war some men who craved it because his father had put them under

²⁴³ Adapted after Jeremiah 31:15.

his feet and brought them to subjection. Wanting to be counted equal to him and to escape from his hands, they concocted many evil and heavy accusations and brought them up before the Amir [Bayazid]. Some charged that he urged the Hungarians against him, others contented that they were sovereign lords and desired to serve under his tsardom. . . .

After that the pious and always remembered Prince Stephen set off even though he was afraid for he had yielded to some people's advice to become a friend of the Hungarians. However, when he realized that this endeavor is impossible, he consulted with his pious mother²⁴⁴ and went to the Easterner²⁴⁵ for, according to Solomon, "the heart of the tsar is in the hands of God"—Lord, he was counting on Your grace, so that the deeds that terrified him most and made him tremble would be counted on his behalf—transformed his raging wrath into mercy and love, and received, as if he were his true son, kind words of advice and instruction. Therefore, he appeared before Bayazid.²⁴⁶ When all who had gathered there left after dinner as was the custom, he did not wish to go out, but stood up and remained in his place. When the tsar inquired of the reason, he answered: "Sire! Because I do not wish to be slandered before Your Majesty by someone else, I will confess my offense myself. Some people managed to convince me to abandon the service of your tsardom and make friends with the Hungarians. I reconsidered, however, and decided that this would not be right. I recalled Your Majesty's care for me and my oaths, and came to you. Here, my life before God is in your hands, do with me as you wish." The other wondered and remained silent for a while and then said: "Oh beloved one! What did you think to accomplish with the Hungarians? Didn't you know that I plan to take [their] land and make it mine? What will you do there? Did some of the lords who bowed their heads to the Hungarians preserve their lordships?" He then mentioned by name the Bulgarian tsars and some others, and continued: "Therefore, if you are with me and you go where I do not go you would make a mistake. But if you stay with me wherever I happen to be, there is no reason

²⁴⁴ Princess Militsa, the widow of Prince Stephan Lazarevic, who took the veil under the name Eugenia.

²⁴⁵ Sultan Bayazid I.

²⁴⁶ The encounter took place during one of Bayazid's meetings with his Christian vassals in 1393.

to worry.²⁴⁷ For we are lords and if we do not attack others they will attack us. The most powerful tsardoms are supported by the army and have large territories. I hold you as the greatest and most beloved son: this I declare to everyone, my own [people] and the Easterners. Who, by the way, is more honored by me but you? I am getting old and will, consequently, die in battle or from illness. And if you were with me, your time will come too. Because my sons, of whom there are many, will raise, brother against the brother, and every one of them will send to you asking for your help or at least friendship rather than hostility. In times like those you will be able to hold onto your land and other lands around it and you will become a great and famous ruler. Even now you're the lord of your own land. Listen to me, therefore, and I will explain what you need to do. While I am still alive, try to break down the powerful among your people and subject them to your will. For after that you will not be able to do it even if you wish. Furthermore, appoint as your officials and maintain at your expense nobles and commoners, honor them, and let them rule with you; take the power from those who slander you and the likes of them."²⁴⁸

After the tsar instructed him with these and even more eloquent words, he went back home. Oh, great miracle! Has anyone ever seen or heard about something like that? The one who was supposed to be guilty and put to death was given the power of a true son and instructed with such words by someone who did not even share his religion!

Prince Stephen took the road to his fatherland and came back home honored greatly not only by the one whom we just mentioned but by his powerful men as well and, during his reign, by all the nations which the Ishmaelites had put under their feet. They all welcomed him eagerly, marveled at him, and honored him greatly. As for the Christians, all of them sent thanks to God from the bottom of their hearts for raising the fortunes of his chosen one.

After that the proud and majestic Bayazid opened war on the Hungaro-Vlachs and moved his entire army against them. He crossed the Danube in the year 6903 [1394], engaged in battle the great and

²⁴⁷ Bayazid invokes Stephan's vassal obligations.

²⁴⁸ Constantine puts in the mouth of Bayazid this speech, in the style of the classical Greek authors, to foretell the political disintegration of the Ottoman state after the battle of Ankara in 1402.

sovereign Voevoda Ioan Mircha and a great bloodshed ensued.²⁴⁹ In that battle perished King Marko and Constantine.²⁵⁰ Prince Stephen, about whom we relate here, fought alongside these rulers in the battle. They were all on the side of the Ishmaelites although under duress and against their will. They say that the blessed Marko told this to Constantine: “I will only say this now: I pray to God to help the Christians in this battle and grant me to be the first to die in this battle!” When the tsar came back, he made peace with them.²⁵¹

Two years later the tsar sent his sons with an uncountable army against Bosna and the Christ-loving Prince Stephen went with them. In that year it snowed so much that only the oldest men recalled to have witnessed something like that. When they cut down trees to make fires in the orchards and the fires blazed they sank down so much that those around them felt the warmth as if from a distance but did not dare come closer. Because of the severe weather few of the army and the prisoners of war got back safely to their lands. For that reason the Christ-loving Stephen was blamed for the death of these people but those who slandered him did not accomplish anything because God was on his side. . . .

[After the battle of Ankara and the capture of Bayazid in 1402] he said, in the town statutes, which he composed himself: “After Kossovo I was a slave of the Ishmaelite people until the tsar of the Persians and the Tatars²⁵² came and vanquished them and the merciful God delivered me from their hands. When I returned from there I found this wonderful place and great city since ancient times, Belgrade. But because it was ruined and deserted, I rebuilt it and handed it over to

²⁴⁹ Ioan Mircha (1386–1418) was the ruler of Vlachia. The battle took place at Rovine in 1395 and was inconclusive but the Ottomans suffered heavy losses. On his way back across the Danube Bayazid arrested the Bulgarian Tsar Ioan Shishman (1371–1395), who had been reduced to the lordship of Nicopolis on the Danube, had him executed, and put an end to the medieval Bulgarian state of Tarnov.

²⁵⁰ King Marko of Prilep (the famous Kralji Marko of Balkan folklore) was a Serbian territorial lord who claimed sovereignty after the death of Prince Lazar in 1389. Constantine Dragash was another territorial lord, the last ruler of the small principality of Velbuzhd, now Kjustendil in southwestern Bulgaria. Both were Ottoman vassals and like Stephen accompanied Bayazid in his expedition to Vlachia.

²⁵¹ With the Vlachs.

²⁵² Timurlenk (Tamerlane), the victor of Ankara. As a loyal vassal, Stephen accompanied Bayazid with 3000 horse but managed to escape the disaster unscathed and on his way back passed through Constantinople.

the holy Mother of God.” And he granted to its citizens all kinds of liberties.

But let us return to our story. When he returned to the Reigning City together with his brother Vuk, the pious Prince Stephen heard from everywhere voices honoring him most kindly: it was as if they looked up to the sun. It was then that he was given the rank of Despot by the pious tsar Ioan. He was the nephew of the Lord Tsar Manuel who left him in his place when, oppressed by the earlier mentioned Bayazid, he journeyed to the Old Rome to unite the church and prepare a war of revenge and deliverance.²⁵³ The Reigning City had been under siege for many years and those shut down in it perished from hunger. At night some of them fled the City; others, who were destitute, were ordered to leave.

The pious Ioan and the citizens of Galata, who went through much trouble, were filled with indescribable joy when they saw Stephen in the Reigning City. He expressed his royal affection and handed him the wreath of his rank, which he had woven himself with his brave deeds and piously-suffered feats. Tsar Ioan sent him to his father-in-law on the island of Mitilene²⁵⁴ and asked him to sail with his ships and accompany him to Albania. This is where he wanted to go. He did not tarry long; he had seen the bright Morning Star in this city.²⁵⁵ In the chosen and beautiful city of Mitilene this man, called Kantakuzenos, showered him with kindness and spent on his account without restraint in his gardens, likened to those of Paradise. He was greeted with “Long live,” which is the customary imperial acclamation. It was then that this most highly placed man about whom we are narrating caught a glimpse of the daughter of that lord, which he later married. On her mother’s side she was a niece of Tsar Manuel and because of this the lineage of these lords bore the name Palaeolog. Kantakuzenos told him: “You can take for your married wife any of my daughters.” And this was arranged on the advice and with the assistance of her syster the tsarina, Ioan’s wife. And so, while the Despot and his brother Vuk were on board ship and waited to put to shore on the island the Greek

²⁵³ The Byzantine co-Emperor John VII Palaeolog (1399–1404), nephew of Manuel II Palaeolog (1391–1425), who governed Byzantium during his uncle’s journey to the West to solicit assistance against the Ottomans and discuss the union of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

²⁵⁴ Lesbos.

²⁵⁵ Perhaps allusion to Lady Elena (Jelacha), the daughter of the governor of Lesbos.

Tsar Manuel returned from the West and came to Gallipoli, while the elder son of Bayazid Ildirim came from the East after the battle of Ankara. Here they met, the one on dry land, the other on the water, like father and son, and concluded a firm friendship...

But God had something better in store for him, even greater glory than that. After he left the above mentioned island, the Despot sailed on the ship to the shores of Albania, where the lord of that land welcomed him most kindly and with great honor.²⁵⁶ Besides, he was his son-in-law, for this Albanian lord, by the name of George [Djuradj] was married to Elena, Stephen's sister, of whom he had a son born to him, Balsha, who later became lord of that land and shone with all kinds of good deeds. The Despot informed the pious lady his mother that he was arriving and his above mentioned son-in-law gave him as many troops as he could spare to accompany him. And so he set out and slowly approached the boundaries of Serbia, the territory of the first archbishopric of the Serbians. What else was he to do when the roads were strongly guarded and there were all kinds of investigations and the area teemed with armed people?²⁵⁷ When he arrived at Kossovo where his father fought and found out that the enemies are innumerable, he divided such troops as he had into two, as Jacob did once in ancient times so that if some were cut down others will be saved, if one of the brothers should fall, the other will remain to shepherd the pious flock.²⁵⁸ His mother too, with her motherly zeal, had sent eager soldiers who although late still came and suffered losses. He entrusted the better part of the army to his brother Vuk; taking a smaller detachment, he began the battle. The Ishmaelite multitude in the distance also divided itself in two companies. He then moved to a place called Grachanica and found that his enemies had already taken position there. Courageously, he hurled himself upon them. When they saw him coming, they shouted: "Look, look, Lazar's son!" and at these words they turned their backs and fled. He bloodied his right hand with the blood of his enemies and at this place the prophecy came true: "The Lord's right hand was power and the Lord's right hand was glorified in the fortress... with the multitude of Thee glory Thou vanquished Thee

²⁵⁶ George [Djuradj] Sracimirovic (1385–1404), lord of Zeta.

²⁵⁷ On account of the civil war between Bayazid's sons; that is why Stephen had to take a ship to the Albanian coast and from there go to Serbia rather than risk the direct but dangerous overland journey.

²⁵⁸ Allusion to Genesis 32:7–8; the brothers are Stephen and Vuk.

enemies: one will drive away a thousand and two will chase countless crowds!”²⁵⁹ From that moment they lived in fear and terror of him.

Then his youngest brother took the field against their nephew, but the Christian host routed him and put him to flight. Together with George, his nephew who later became Despot of the Serbian land, there was a certain strong Ishmaelite commander who was in charge of monitoring the fulfillment of the obligation of loyalty to the tsar.²⁶⁰ Then the Caesar Uglesha had joined the Ishmaelites as well and did many favors [to Stephen] sending news to the pious man from their camp about their plans and designs.²⁶¹ Shortly thereafter he found refuge under the wing of Despot Stephen and took over and held the domain of his father, the land of Vranja, Inogoshta, and Preshevo. [Stephen] was the protector of the Christian land. . . .

And so he went about his fatherland, pacified the lands around it and made friends with them, gathered together all the lands, which since ancient times were called Serbian, and even conquered other lands. When he heard about this the king of the West sent to him envoys asking for peace and love between them.²⁶² Having figured that this was an appropriate time to make friends with him he received the envoy respectfully and showed them kindness and hospitality, as was his custom, and then established a pact of peace and friendship with the one who had sent him. Also, as he was surveying his domain, he came across the place that we already mentioned, Belgrade, and requested it from the Hungarians. Because, even though it was within the confines of Serbia, it was as if upon the head and shoulders of the land of Hungary. He created statutes for the city and took care of its constitution. He visited all of his cities and fortified them; those that had separated themselves and had joined the Ishmaelites he conquered. The judges that they had put fled. In that time Suleiman too, set off for the eastern lands to win back his father’s domain. When he learned about that he sent a messenger to the one whom we will always remember to make

²⁵⁹ Free rendition of Exodus 15:6–7.

²⁶⁰ The nephew is George [Djuradj] Brankovic, Serbian Despot (1427–1456), and son of Vuk and Mara Brankovic, Stephan Lazarevic’s sister. For a short while George joined Vuk Lazarevic against Stephen.

²⁶¹ Caesar Uglesha was a Serbian territorial lord of Vranja, Inogoshta, and Preshevo.

²⁶² King Sigismund of Hungary, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1410–1437). Earlier in the *Life* Constantine describes the disastrous crusade of Nikopolis in 1396, led by Sigismund.

peace with him.²⁶³ The pious ruler considered this a great honor and with pleasure made peace with him, after which the messenger went back to his lord. . . .

The now well known to us Stephen did not even think about resting after performing so many honorable deeds, but busied himself with the above mentioned city, which was so ancient and was situated at such a beautiful place. As we already said many times, there is hardly any other city similar to her, especially with her beautiful vista and majestic ship sails, so well fortified and well provided with all kinds of food. We thought about it and we found no other place to which to compare her—neither as a refuge, nor in her convenient connections overland and on the water, so that when under siege, no matter how numerous the enemy, she would be easily assisted and give the defenders a chance to suddenly sail out and attack. Can someone point out to another such city? The Despot saw and considered all this and made haste, even faster than the one who was equal to the apostles,²⁶⁴ although it was an urgent matter that had to be taken care of with all speed, to arrange everything as he wished and designed it. Who is capable of describing all the places and sights, and beauties; the many defensive towers, which he built for those who resided within and without her; her defenses, which looked like Solomon's wall that girds Jerusalem, so that it can be said about them: "The buildings cast their shade upon the neighborhoods," or like Babylon's towering fortified gate, the wall of circuit, and the hanging paradise where that proud one used to climb and say: "Did I not create all this with strong hands and forceful arms?"²⁶⁵ Truly, among the deeds of all the tsars, these were the most beautiful.²⁶⁶ But the despot always interpreted the words of the scriptures in a humble manner to his chosen [friends] and instructed them like a father. Furthermore, he adorned the royal dwelling with an edifice of many hues and surrounded her with many well-placed moats outside her two walls. Indeed, this city appeared to have seven hills for it was very large and beautiful and if you think about it, looked like Zion of the Upper Jerusalem, about whom the prophet proclaimed: "Daughter of Zion, rejoice with all your heart; shout in triumph,

²⁶³ Suleiman (1402–1413), Bayazid's oldest son, participated in the civil wars after the battle of Ankara.

²⁶⁴ His namesake, the martyr St Stephen.

²⁶⁵ Psalms 135:12.

²⁶⁶ That is, the fortifications of Belgrade.

daughter of Zion for you are at the highest place and you have seen the coming of the Tsar.”²⁶⁷ The second [resemblance] is by the river, on the northern side of the great city where the harbor for the ships is located, and where it looks like Lower Jerusalem, which wanted to spread out to the east, as is said: “For nowhere else in the world did we see anything like Jerusalem.” Similarly, this city cannot in truth be called anything else [but Jerusalem], except that she has no Eleon, but instead of Eleon she has one of the rivers of Paradise, which here flows eastward.²⁶⁸ Here the resemblance is with the city under Zion, where there is the life-giving tomb. The third [resemblance] is by the well-defended harbor for the royal ships. The fourth [resemblance] is the huge tower whose edifice, moat, and position look like the house of David. The fifth [resemblance] is when you pass through it and it is the royal treasury. The sixth is to the east of the latter: it is the column that separates the two towers, about which one can really say what Solomon said: “Column of David, on which thousands of shields and arrows hang.”²⁶⁹ A thing to marvel at, standing upon the defensive towers, it is visible from far way. The seventh [resemblance] is to the west where the second royal residence stands. The pious one went between them to reach the ships as if through a secret passage. The great upper city has four gates, to the east, west, north, and south, and the fifth gate connects to the inner city. The southern and eastern gates are large, with huge towers and chained bridges over the moats. The western gate is small and has a bridge and so does the northern gate, which leads to the lower city by the river. The gate that leads into the citadel has a bridge too hung on chains over the front moat. The city is accessible only from the southern side; it is strongly fortified on her northern, western, and eastern sides and is protected by the rivers as well. In the eastern part of the city there is a great church resembling Getsimania as you descend toward Cedar Brook. This metropolitan temple, named after the Dormition of the most pure Lady and Mother of God, was in the middle of well-built premises, comprising gardens, orchards, and other properties with villages. There was the see of the metropolitan of Belgrade, the exarch of all the lands of Serbia. This church was the richest of the Serbian churches in the time of the pious

²⁶⁷ After Zachariah 9:9.

²⁶⁸ The river Danube.

²⁶⁹ After Song 4:4.

[Despot Stephen]. He built from the foundations the church of the three great lights in a garden designating it as the burial place of the high priests of this church.²⁷⁰

He built a hospice for the sick as well with a church in the name of St Nicholas the Miracle-maker, next to [a spring with] most sweet water and planted gardens overflowing with chosen fruit, and endowed it with villages and other property. This hospice offered shelter to foreigners and the sick and provided them with food, this helping them to get back on their feet again. He gathered the richest of his men from all parts of his domain, settled them in the city and honored them just like his namesake, the one who was equal to the apostles, did with the twelve in his city. To the city he granted a law with all kinds of liberties and immunities so that they did not get oppressed. It was written in it that the Lord's grace that had descended upon her and she was delivered from slavery. He gave them a golden seal with the image of the city so that if someone wanted to trade anywhere in his country he would be provided with a sealed paper testifying that he was a citizen of that city and would not be liable to taxes and fees. He requested and received such immunities for her merchants from the lords of the neighboring countries, and even from the king himself. As a result, people from all the surrounding lands began to arrive, day after day, and in a short amount of time the city was thickly settled. The more of them came, the more the despot was eager to attract them. He granted [the city] some of his own lands and gathered even more [settlers] as once Neemiah did in Jerusalem.²⁷¹ And so, he supported the city abundantly with everything that was necessary and made it shine as brightly as a royal residence. Throughout his entire life he took special care that the city grew and became even more glamorous so that what was said about Jerusalem could be said about her: "Raise your eyes and look around, they are all assembling."²⁷² Enough said about this.

We have to mention another city, which also leads to the Upper Jerusalem and resembles it as well. He wished to converse with hermits and could not satiate his desire to spent time with them for when the

²⁷⁰ The text reads *perivol*, a calque from the Greek which apparently indicates a church in the names of John Chrysostomos, Basil the Great, and Gregory the Theologian built by Stephen within a garden on the metropolis's premises.

²⁷¹ Neemiah received the permission of Artaxerxes I (464–424 BCE) to rebuild the demolished walls of Jerusalem.

²⁷² Isaiah 49:18.

love of God enters someone's heart it quickly seizes him, elevates him, and raises him high. He rejoiced much being in their company and considered this so much worthier than Croesus's treasures as golden vessels compare to clay pots. He took care to always have some of them in his presence. And because he knew that silence is indispensable for being able to receive the great honor of vision and understanding he went about the land, to mountains, plains, and deserts, in a quest for the most suitable place for the building of a foundation that could house silence.²⁷³ When he happened to come across a good and appropriate place for such a home, he began the endeavor with prayer and laid down its foundations in the name of the Holy Trinity and the sovereign divinity.²⁷⁴ All this was done with the greatest zeal, the best materials, by the most respected masons and the most skillful artists whose colors were everywhere beautified with much gold. He sent for such people everywhere, even to the islands. In this way, with great and indescribable diligence, the foundation and the town around it were built as excellent dwellings for those living the communal life. He gathered from everywhere zealous and marvelous monks and settled them there. He gave them villages and vineyards and guaranteed with his signature their liberties in his entire land. Day after day he heaped treasures here. He also built his tomb there, where he was laid to rest not long afterwards. He granted them most precious icons adorned with gold and pearls, provided them with all liturgical books, ceremonial vestments, and ecclesiastical vessels beautified with so much pearls and gold that they surpassed even those of the chosen Lauras in the Holy Mount, which he had adorned as well, each with bright light-holders shining with gold. How can we describe everything that he brought in and beautified! Likening himself to a seraph, he arranged that the God-chosen liturgy of the Last Supper was celebrated most honorably.

On the day of the Holy Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the holy disciples of the Word and God with tongues of fire, he called up the patriarch (whose name was Cyril) with the entire ecclesiastical order of the Serbian chief priests, abbots, and other honorable men, as well as many notables to celebrate the rejuvenation of the temple. Many of the poor arrived too to receive the alms that were their due and which he always generously gave away. One had to see

²⁷³ Allusion to hesychasm.

²⁷⁴ Constantine means the monastery of Resava dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

the admirable celebration to recall the words Solomon uttered when he renewed his house and the people joined in the feast.

He began the building of this foundation in the year 6915 [1407]. The year before his pious lady Eugenia, the mother of the one with the same name, presented herself [to God]. She had adopted that name when she became a nun and was laid to rest in her own monastery called Ljubostinja, [dedicated] to the Dormition of the most pure Mother of God.

He continued to develop these two building projects, the reigning city, which we mentioned earlier and the temple in Resava throughout his life and constantly added new wings and kept his eyes on them. They did not, therefore, rise in the short time I took to narrate about them as it would have been had I talked about battles, but for many years.

And so, after the messenger we mentioned earlier went back there was peace and prosperity.²⁷⁵ But the one who incited Cain against his brother Abel without any reason did not rest in peace. He stirred up the already mentioned Vuk to request from the tsar a great number of troops: actually, all of his soldiers. Tsar Suleiman had already taken all of the eastern lands, and he went to him and told him: "I will rise against my brother. Either he will give me half of our father's land and cities with which I will serve Your Majesty, or I will plunder the land thoroughly and destroy it." His request was promptly granted. With him went the man who was the first to shed Christian blood, who bore the same battle name as the Ishmaelite who was the culprit for the great bloodshed in the battle at the river Maritsa, Evrenoz, and other chosen commanders.²⁷⁶ Presently, they arrived [in Serbia]. However, Despot Stephen did not wish to tear apart and hand over to slavery his pious flock, which God had delivered. What happened after that? They went about the land like wild beasts, pillaging, cutting down, and burning. Some towns were burned down completely, which was a great disgrace and ignominy in military terms since the war was not against barbarians but among the same people. And even though the invaders were many, many times [Stephen] vanquished them and

²⁷⁵ Constantine returns to the political history of Stephen's reign picking up where he left Stephen making peace with Suleiman.

²⁷⁶ Constantine refers to Evrenoz Beg, one of Sultan Murad's commanders at the battle of Chernomen in 1371, at which Despot Uglesha and King Vukashin perished. See the account of the monk Isaiah below. The name is written on the margins of the manuscript.

terrified their hearts. What else should I say? He feared lest he suffered like David who cursed the land of Gibeah so that neither dew nor rain fell on it for there Jonathan's blood had been shed.²⁷⁷ He vanquished him without pressing too hard on him, lest he be blamed for shedding his brother's blood.

The latter, however, came back with even more soldiers, fulfilling the words of the prophet: "Lord, foreign tribes entered Thee domain and polluted Thee temple."²⁷⁸ The pious Despot Stephen feared blame but did not confront them. For he was left with a few chosen [people] who were not seduced. Vuk pointed to this in the letters he sent him, in which on the one hand he promised gifts and privileges, and on the other, uttered threats. With these missives in hand he fell his knees before the image of the Savior, wept and spoke like this: "Look at this my Christ, You know that what they say against me is wrong and that my servants betrayed me as did Thee disciple Judas. Protect, therefore, to the end those few whom you have left to me." Such and similar sorrowful words he uttered from the bottom of his heart. This happened in the great city, that is, in Belgrade, inside his house. And they kept going about the country and came close even to Belgrade, gathered an uncountable amount of loot and devastated the entire land. When the despot saw this insufferable evil, he agreed to the division of the country. And so, since that time his brother Vuk with his provinces and his notables who ruled their fathers' domains with their people served Suleiman. The despot established himself in his portion of the land...

But let us say something about the eastern affairs. That sultan heaped all kind of praise and love upon Stephen on account of his perfect conduct.²⁷⁹ When he put in chains one of his commanders, he said to those who interceded on his behalf: "I will not let him go until I hear the advice of my brother the despot." And he sent people to him to get his advice. His response was: "If you wish to raise a snake in your house do it, but at least cut off its tail!" When the sultan heard that, he kept the commander in chains until he died. In similar manner he inquired with him on other issues as well. The sultan was waging war in the East, but still sent an army through Bosna against the Hungarians. There they routed the Hungarian *bans*, captured them, and led

²⁷⁷ 2 Samuel 1:21. Stephen was afraid lest he had his brother Vuk killed.

²⁷⁸ After Psalms 78:1.

²⁷⁹ Sultan Mehmed I Celebi (1413–1421), the last of Bayazid's sons and the victor in the civil war.

them before the sultan. However, with the intercession of the despot they were ransomed and set free thus saving themselves from cruel death. Their names were Peter and Ivanish of Mirovitsa. The sultan also returned the Bulgarian captives which Musa had captured and led away.²⁸⁰ That sultan spent his life in peace with those whom he had made his friends in the beginning. In the end, he died in Adrianopolis rather than on the battlefield. They kept his death secret.²⁸¹ When the news reached Despot Stephen, many began to instigate him to make his move, even some from among the eastern governors. But he always said: "I have sworn to the sultan to support his children...."

The pious Despot Stephen came down with the foot disease from which he had been suffering for a long time. Many times he was afraid he was about to die of it; therefore, he sent for his nephew George.²⁸² Then he went to the place Srebarnitsa. There he convened a council attended by the patriarch, the honorable high priests, the notables representing all powers, and all chosen ones. He blessed George before the council as the one who were to take the reigns of the state and said: "From now on know that he will be ruling in my place." He offered a prayer and laid his hands on him and asked everyone to swear an oath that they would be loyal to him and cursed those who would harbor any suspicion. Also, he swore him as well to uphold what had been arranged for him according to custom when he was raised: "You are to take care of everyone the way I wanted to do it myself: for there are many who served me well but I was not able to reward them." And he uttered many a word of advice and pious instruction. From that moment they began to support their young lord even more loyally than in the beginning. As for the pious man, he got well and kept on doing good deeds.

Murad [II] wished to launch an expedition against the West. He saw that the pious despot visited the Hungarian king every year and, having taken the advice of his detractors, sent one of his loyal men to find out the truth about it while the despot was still there. The envoy had to wait for a long time the return of the despot. When he came back and learned about this, he sent him presents but did not grant him an audience. The envoy returned to the tsar and uttered many an evil

²⁸⁰ During the civil war when part of the Bulgarian population under the sons of the last tsars, Constantine and Fruzhin, rose and joined Musa's opponents.

²⁸¹ Mehmed I died on May 26, 1421. His son Murad II took over.

²⁸² Djuradj Brankovic.

word. This is what he said: “If you do not go against them, they will set out against you!” The tsar went to Sofia where the despot’s troops had gathered as was their custom; the envoy too, arrived himself. The tsar kept the troops for a while and then told them: “Go to your lord and tell him that I am coming.” He gave them some of his own soldiers to accompany them to the frontier lest evil befell them, for they had come under his safe conduct. Presently, he set out himself and arrived at Krushevats; there he looted the land and went back again, for the pious [despot] send a messenger to him. . . .

Then again did the Easterner hear that the Westerners had come to Vlachia to fortify its fortresses and make the Vlachs their vassals. The sultan set off and arrived at Bdin. He sailed on the river and captured the island from the Hungarians, destroyed their ships, and cut down the people he found there.²⁸³ After that he moved against Severin and sent [troops] to conquer it, but as soon as the Hungarians appeared his soldiers fled.

In the meantime the blessed man kept sending exquisite and abundant gifts to the tsar and went about the land building new churches of God. As soon as he heard that the island had been taken he set out to return to Belgrade. When he reached the place called Glavitsi, he had lunch there and then went out hunting as was his custom, his hunting falkon perched on his wrist. But he did not carry it properly although up to that moment he had always followed the rules of hunting in an admirable manner. He sat very unstable in the saddle and almost fell down. They rushed to support him on both sides and led him back to camp. Once there, he lay down—a sorrowfull sight for everyone—and uttered these words only: “George, send for George!” He said no more till the morrow when he yielded up his soul to God.

Despot Stephen presented himself to God in the year 6935 [1427], in the afternoon of the nineteenth day of the month of July, which was a Saturday, at five o’clock. When he swayed on the horse, a terrible thunderbolt, such as never had been heard before, broke out loose over the city. In the same hour darkness fell over the entire country as if it were nightfall and only dispersed a little after sundown. All this happened almost at noontime.

²⁸³ The island on the Danube opposite Belgrade, which was a major Hungarian stronghold.

- 152 Life of Kosmas of Zograph, *middle of the fifteenth century (excerpts)*. Kosmas was born in the last quarter of the fourteenth century and died in 1423. His anonymous *Life* was composed on a tenth-century model and is known in a Greek and a Slavic version. The few original parts outline the career of a bright and dedicated youth who followed in the steps of the great fourteenth-century fathers and joined Zograph, the Bulgarian foundation on Mount Athos, to serve God in humility. Edition: Ivan Dujchev, "La vie de Kozma de Zographon," in *Hilendarski Sbornik*, vol. 2 (Belgrade, 1971), 62.

Life of the venerable and God-bearing father Kosmas, the miracle-maker, who shone in the holy foundation of tsars and patriarchs Zograph, on Mount Athos.

This venerable father of ours Kosmas was of Bulgarian origins. He was requested and born through prayers to God by his pious, noble, and virtuous parents, like the great and holy Euthymius. When he was a seven years old child they sent him to learn how to read and write, first in his own native Bulgarian language and after that in the Hellenic dialect of the Greeks. When the parents of the saint saw that he came of age they planned to marry him. However, he left everything behind and secretly fled from his parents. Asking around, he reached the Holy Mount of Athos, taking the road that begins at the end of the Holy Mount, in the place called Provlak. The demon, who hated good and wanted to stir up trouble and hinder the saint and turn him back created an apparition in the form of a wall that stretched from one end of the sea to the other and seemed insurmountable. The venerable, thinking in himself, said to himself: "How do monks enter the Holy Mount, by ship or by climbing ladders?" And he marveled at this. As there was no one there to ask, he kneeled down and prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ, through the prayers of Thee most pure Mother show me the way in which the monks enter the Holy Mount so that I, Your humble servant, can see it." As soon as the saint uttered these words, the demonic apparition disappeared, the wall became invisible, and a straight road was revealed. The venerable entered the Holy Mount and went to the foundation of Zograph. The monks there welcomed him joyfully with kind greetings. A short time thereafter the blessed Kosmas approached the abbot and was clothed by him in the angelic image. He was placed in the church to serve the ecclesiastical office because he was bright, meek, and worthy of such an office. When the feast of the Annunciation of our most holy Lady, the most pure Virgin Mary came, which is celebrated with pomp in the holy Laura of tsars and patriarchs, in the most holy temple of the holy monastery

of Vatoped, the venerable Kosmas asked his spiritual father the abbot for blessing so that he can attend the feast. He was blessed and went together with the other brothers to the church; he entered with great joy and worshipped there.

Not a long time after that he was consecrated first for a deacon and later for a presbyter, and since then engaged in fast and prayer and labored hard in monastic obedience, without sparing himself and without grumbling...

Vladislav Gramatik, account of the translatio of the relics of St John of Rila in Rila Monastery, 1479. 153

The account has a strong historical component and is a worthy example of the author's striving to emulate his teacher Patriarch Euthymius in style and content. It is a fully original work written in the manner of, and perhaps inspired by, Tsamblak's *translatio* of the relics of St Petka as a continuation of Euthymius' *Life* of the saint. It was incorporated in Euthymius' *Life of St John* in the correct chronological order. The account provides clues about the conditions of the Bulgarian and Balkan lands in the first half of the century after the Ottoman conquest and shows the effort of the last generation educated in medieval Bulgaria to maintain the standards of high literacy. It is extant in four versions; the earliest one is Vladislav's autograph, preserved in the so-called *Rilski Sbornik*. Editions: Kałużniacki, *Werke*, 405–31; Ivanov, *Žitija na sv. Ivan Rilski*, 74–85.

The primordial enemy of human salvation and foe of humility, the damned devil, who once militated against the Creator of everything and because of his arrogance was brought low and thrown in the darkness of Hell, and who became darkness himself on account of his sly willfulness, causes war and tribulation everywhere. When he saw the most glorious and most marvelous portents and cures, which for a long time have occurred at the casket of the venerable [John of Rila] and mostly because of his proclivity to work evil and his feuding [with God], he was seized by a far greater hatred of the venerable than before and became completely dominated by furious anger and bitter envy. Not being able to stand it any longer, he immediately resorted to his usual and devastating wars.

Later, after not a small amount of time had passed and when the power of the Greek tsardom weakened and was even exhausted completely, with the permission of God and according to his unknowable predestination, the Ishmaelite nation²⁸⁴ suddenly attacked all of the

²⁸⁴ I.e., the Ottomans.

eastern and southern countries of Asia, which were subject to the Greeks and conquered them. They came even to Thrace and subdued it. After they routed completely the Serbian armies, which were then in Thrace by the so-called [river] Maritsa, [the Ishmaelites] turned on the Serbian lordship.²⁸⁵ A bloody battle was fought at the place called Kossovo. The vicious oppressor who led them died in the fighting.²⁸⁶ Before long, he received a worthy reward for his godlessness: that his, he was relieved from his barbarian and iniquitous soul in a terrible and unseemly way. In the heat of the fray he was unexpectedly deprived of his life by Serbian warriors. Alas, sin prevailed because of our trespasses and the Serbian land fell under their rule.

A short while thereafter they conquered the Bulgarian provinces as well, as if these were a weak nest, together with that marvelous city²⁸⁷ where the miracle-working relics of the miracle-working father rested. Their armies hurled themselves wildly and godlessly, devastating and shedding blood every day and every hour. No one could resist in any conceivable way their terrible onslaught. In pitched battles they were superior to everyone and won shining victories. Thanks to all that, their pernicious evil spread out and ruled everywhere.

Many provinces and villages were deserted then, together with the holy monasteries and the divine temples, which were destroyed by fire. In that time was also destroyed and completely abandoned the most holy foundation of the God-bearing father, which is in the desert of Rila where the venerable, while he was still alive, spent his incorporeal and angelic life in suffering and fasts, and which was later excellently rebuilt from the foundations for the greater glory of God and in honor of the venerable by the famous *Caesar* Hreljio, who donned the monastic habit under the name Hariton.²⁸⁸

Long time after that, when the military battles that were fought on Bulgarian territory ceased and social life restored its quiet current, a group of lay men appeared.²⁸⁹ They were pious, of noble progeny, and by origin Bulgarians. They lived in the village called Granitsa, located at about two *poprishta* distance from Kjustendil.²⁹⁰ They were adorned

²⁸⁵ At the battle of Chernomen in 1371.

²⁸⁶ Sultan Murad (1362–1389).

²⁸⁷ Tarnov fell in 1393.

²⁸⁸ See the inscriptions outlining *Caesar* Hreljio's donations below.

²⁸⁹ These "laymen" were secular clergy, or a family of village priests.

²⁹⁰ A *poprishie* is about 250 meters (800 feet).

with the priestly rank and when they performed the service they stood before the Lord like the ancient Zacchariah, the father of St John the Forerunner. They offered to God endless sacrifices on their own behalf and for the many sins of the people. When they sent their spouses to God they left secular life and took on themselves the sweet burden of Christ. Greatly fearing God, they settled in the desert of Rila, in the above mentioned foundation of the venerable one, which at that time was abandoned and deserted, as was mentioned above. They became the benchmark and example of virtuous life for all those who came after them. They spent their time exercising themselves in labors and glorious deeds, in great patience, prayer, singing, and fasts, as well as in reading the divine books and other similar writings, which I do not have the time to describe here—for this a more voluminous work is necessary. There were three of them and they were natural brothers. They were sons of the blessed bishop of Krupnik, Lord Jacob, who with his holy service guarded well the speech-endowed flock of Christ. The foremost among them was called Joseph, the second David, and the third Theophan.

As it was said, the three of them came to the above-mentioned desert because they wanted to settle there. Besides, they did not come all at the same time or together but one at a time. And because they found the buildings of the monastery, except the church and the tower, completely ruined and destroyed, with God's help they speedily re-erected them from the foundations. They repaired them thoroughly and rebuilt them, and adorned them with God-pleasing images, putting in much effort and care at a great expenditure. They accomplished all this not by themselves and not solely with their means and the means in possession of the entire community of brethren, but with the alms of certain God-loving men, and above all with at the instigation and with the assistance of the pious lord and new donor of the holy foundation, Lord George, who diligently and carefully delivered everything that the monastic buildings needed. Even now their style and beauty attract and urge to God-loving zeal, like a strong magnet attracts iron, not only the locals from this province and the lands around it, but even [people] from far away. They go there with great zeal and strong faith to offer to the holy foundation what they have and even more. Having received there blessings and the greatest of rewards, especially on the saint's feast day, they go back to their homes rejoicing and with joyful souls.

As they occupied themselves with all these things and others like them, and worked laborously on the rebuilding of the monastery and

every one in the vicinity talked about them suddenly, unexpected but very joyous news reached them. The truth was brought to their ears and filled their souls with much delight and spiritual joy. A priest by the name of Jacob, who was *protopop* in the city of Plovdiv in Thrace and who had great faith and love for the venerable father and light of the desert John came to the monastery and told them about the miracle-working casket of the venerable one: that it was still to be found, after so many years, in the archbishopric of Tarnov, even though somewhat covered and unknown, and that it was fully accessible even for people from afar. He also said that he had seen it with his own eyes when he had been there on business with his metropolitan and many others, and that after he had bowed down to the holy relics of the venerable he had been able to convince the local priests to give him a small particle of them for blessing.

When they heard this, the then prior of the foundation, the honorable *hieromonk* Lord David and his brothers in Christ rejoiced mightily and most carefully inquired about everything. Joseph, who was their first abbot and the first one to plant the beginning and foundation of virtue, and who was the older brother of the then prior, had already departed to God and exchanged the temporary life for the everlasting and incorruptible life. A short time thereafter, another news-bearer came to them and told them the same thing. He too said that he had visited Tarnov on a certain occasion, had seen the miracle-working casket of the saint with his own eyes, and learned everything about him.

Still, they were not completely convinced. Even if it was true, they found it hard to believe because up to that point they had neither heard nor realized that the casket of the venerable was really in Tarnov. He had been cast in the depths of forgetfulness on account of the considerable time that had passed and even more than that because of the turbulences and violence that occurred in the city when the barbarians captured it. They [the monks] thought that when God gave it into the hands of the enemy because of our sins, all that was holy and precious there, including the casket of the saint, had been plundered and carried elsewhere. They did not, as was mentioned, completely trust the news and as they wanted to be informed whether it corresponded to the truth they sent there one of the brethren who knew that province well. They asked him to find out about everything, see the relics of the venerable one with his own eyes, and come back and tell them in detail about everything he had seen and found out.

And so it happened. The messenger, having informed himself thoroughly about everything they had asked him soon came back to them and told them that it was all true. With the greatest speed and zeal [they] immediately informed the pious tsarina Lady Maria, who was the daughter of the pious Despot George, the then ruler of the Serbians, and the wife of the great and sovereign Amir Murad, who was famous among the ancients with his many battles and military victories.²⁹¹ At that time she lived in the village [of Ezhovo], which is located several *stadii* south of the city of Ser; there she had a residence. All of them begged her to arrange for the relics of the venerable to be transported to his foundation in Rila, saying that for this she would receive the reward of God in Heaven. She heard their plea and, her soul seized by an even greater love of God, he acquiesced to it and took care that their wish was fulfilled. She found an appropriate time and appeared before the autocrat, the Great Amir Mehmet [II] who then held the tsar's scepter. She was strong and courageous before him. She addressed him and she was not disappointed in her hope: she was granted what she asked for. She received from the tsar's power a written order to the judge of Tarnov to give them as quickly as possible what they wanted. When she came back from the capital to her home, she called them to herself and promptly handed them the order.

With the order in hand they diligently and speedily returned to the monastery. A council of the brethren was called and by its decision and the order of the abbot the following [brothers] were sent to Tarnov [to bring back] the saint: hieromonk lord Theophan, hieromonk lord Barlaam, brother Kelasius, presbyter John of Belchin, and others. Their leader in this important business was hieromonk lord Theophan, who was natural brother of the then prior of the holy foundation and immediately below him in the management of the affairs of everything that pertained to the monastery. He was richly endowed with all qualities and knew the sacred scripture. With his feats of fasting and especially with the strength of his mind he surpassed everyone in the monastery. Clearly, he surpassed them in the virtues appropriate for the exemplary monk as well.

²⁹¹ Despot George (Djuradj) Brankovic (1427–1456) and Sultan Murad II (1423–1444, 1446–1451). Murad II married Mara Brankovic in 1435 while she was still a girl; she lived until 1487 and continued to exercise significant influence over Murad's successor, Mehmed the Conqueror (1444–1446 and 1451–1481).

The messengers arrived in the royal Bulgarian city of Tarnov and found themselves a place close to where the saint rested. However, when the city notables found out the reason for their arrival they raised a great turmoil and uproar among the population. [The people] argued and quarreled with them. By no means did they want them to carry the saint out of the city and tried in every possible way to prevent them from doing so and send them back empty-handed and without success. Because the argument heated up and the disagreement on the issue between them grew considerably and lasted for almost three days and the quarrel involved even more people even among those who take decisions in such cases, the two parties mutually agreed to appear before the city judge and ask him to quickly adjudicate the dispute over the relics. Then the monks handed over to the judge the letter of the tsar, which ordered him to give to the desert men the light of the desert John without any delay. The judge immediately gave in their hands the treasure desired by all to which nothing can be compared: the most honorable casket of the God-bearing father. The quarrel ceased completely and the dispute between the two parties was settled.

The monks received the holy casket of the venerable with great honor and joy; they wrapped the relics in the cleanest fabrics and sprinkled them with chrism of the finest fragrance. Without tarrying in the city any longer, on the next day, they loaded the saint's casket on a mule and left the city together, setting out for home. None of the citizens went out with them, except some of the poor and the [local] monks. On the sixth hour of that day they reached a river that the local people called Rosita [Rositsa], a short distance from the city. The river had overflowed and had filled up its bed to the banks. It was turbulent and fast-flowing, and there was no way they could cross it, which caused them great grief. As they stood so not knowing what to do, suddenly a sweet smoke came out of the casket and filled an area that could be traveled in two hours. That gave them courage: they waded into the river and led by the prayers of the saint crossed it without harm and continued on their way elated and full of joy.

When they approached the city of Nicopol²⁹² and were about to enter they were met, at two *poprishta* distance from the city, by a magnate called

²⁹² Either Nicopolis on the Danube, Shishman's last residence, or the medieval and modern village of Nikjup, about 20 km north of Tarnov, on the site of the ancient Roman provincial capital Nicopolis ad Istrum.

Bogdan *zhupan* and other *bolijars* with him. He was a very Christ-loving [man] and had great faith in St John. They entered the city together, went to his palace, and brought the casket of the saint into his chapel. It was filled with lighted candles and sweet aromas of burning incense. They served the divine service of the holy mysteries of God Christ and then entered the church dedicated to the saint. After that, they went back to his house where a well-prepared and abundantly laden table waited for them. Almost the entire city gathered here, women and children, small and great, rejoicing and singing divine songs. The marvelous magnate managed all this with his bare-headed servants and did not even sit down on his chair until the fourth hour of the night.²⁹³ No one returned to their home until the celebration was over.

On the morrow, after they got up and sang their usual songs and made ready to set out, they heard a great noise and clamor. The entire city had flocked to send the saint on his way. Then again, as it happened earlier, the casket of the saint emitted a strong aroma, which has not ceased to flow out ever since, day and night. Thereafter the above mentioned magnate showered the carriers of the casket of the venerable with honors and gifts and everything necessary for the journey and accompanied them and the bier of the saint, together with the other *bolijars*, all the way to the river Osam. There, each of them embraced the casket, shed abundant tears, and then took their leave and turned back home, all the time casting back glances to the others [carrying the relics].

Traveling in this manner and praising God, several days later they reached the capital city of Sredets and brought the casket into the great temple of the holy and great martyr George, where the holy king Milutin, called Banski, lies as well.²⁹⁴ The entire city flocked there with candles and incense-burners, because the saints were laid on the same bed and the sweet aroma they emitted was twice as strong. On the next day the monks decided to inform the monastery about their arrival with the saint by sending one of their servants carrying a letter with the following content:

“To the most honorable among the holy monks hieromonk lord David, our father and abbot of the holy foundation of our venerable

²⁹³ Until about 11 PM.

²⁹⁴ The metropolitan church of St George kept the relics of King Stephen Urosh II Milutin (1282–1321).

and God-bearing John the Desert-dweller, and to all brothers in Christ, from the most humble among the monks Theophan and the brothers. Rejoice in the Lord! Let it be known to you that we, carrying the most honorable casket of the venerable, traveled the European lands supported in everything by God's grace and your prayers. We are now in the city of Sredec and will remain here five or six days, after which we will set out for the monastery. Let your holiness takes care to go out and meet the saint with the honor he deserves. Pray for us!"

Having sent the messenger, the monks rested for six days in the city, as it was mentioned. In the meantime every one praised and honored him. A woman among the richest in that place, a benefactor, had a [new] casket made for the saint from wood that did not rot at the price of one hundred *penezhi*.²⁹⁵ After they laid the saint in the new casket, the donor George, the husband of the woman, gave six gold coins with which an expensive cover for the casket of the saint was bought.

When the seventh day arrived, at the time of the usual morning liturgy, the citizens learned that [the monks] were making ready to leave together with the saint. Then every one, along with their wives and children, gathered in the church and decided that the priests in their holy vestments should bid farewell to the saint with lighted candles. However, some of the people did not allow that, saying: "We are afraid of the envy of the Agarenes; they can cause us harm when we least expect it." This advice seemed reasonable to every one. And so, they lifted up the casket of the saint and the people set out [with it]: many chosen men on horseback, others on foot, and most of the women and the children barefooted. When they arrived at four *poprishta* from the city, they descended upon the casket with tears and sighs, and kissed the casket of the saint as it lay on the bier, saying: "You are going away now, marvelous father, leaving us orphans as we were earlier!" Then they beat their breasts and turned back. The magnates and the priests continued together with the monks to the place called Leshnitsa. There they shared a meal [with the monks], took their leave as it was customary, and turned back. Some of them, however, went with the saint all the way to the monastery. From that point on, they took the saint down from the mule that was carrying him and put him on their shoulders. When the people from the nearby villages learned about the coming of the saint, they gathered at the river called German, in a village of

²⁹⁵ The value of the *penezh* cannot be established.

about a day and a half distance from the monastery to wait for him. Similarly, when the abbot and the brothers of the monastery learned that the saint was close, they set out with the priests and the deacons. With candles and incense-burners they solemnly met him at the said village by the river. There they rested for a day and a night. In the morning, they lit the candles and the incense-burners and prayed. The abbot and the priests took the relics and set out in front of the casket, rejoicing and singing as in ancient times David did in front of the tent. Together with the people they walked all the way to the great mountain [of Rila].

When they arrived at the feet of the mountain, the abbot ordered that breakfast was served lest someone gets exhausted by hunger. The people sat down on the grass as they did once at the miracles of my Christ. How many people had gathered there! In memory of the saint they made a sign there; even now every year the people of that place celebrate the memory of the saint on that day. Then they got up and walked to one of the monastery's estates, called Orlitsa, and the church of the Holy Apostles. It was built diligently from the very foundations long time ago by then prior of the monastery, Lord David. On the next day fell the feast day of the supreme apostles Peter and Paul. They celebrated and honored the feast together with the people sending to God thankful praises. On the next morning, June 30, the abbot and the priests, together with the bishop Lord Joseph, who was the abbot's natural brother, took the casket and carried it, singing "Lord have mercy," and the people followed on foot all the way to the bridge above the estate. Here some of the people took over [carrying] the saint and, as if given wings by the swift and weightless Holy Spirit, soon disappeared from the eyes of the others, because they ran faster than the light-footed deer and the high-flying eagle. It was as if the saint carried them invisibly rather than them carrying him. That miracle was followed by other miracles. Some of the people got on horseback and rushed after them riding up and down but neither caught up with the saint nor caught a glimpse of him. Marveling mightily at this, many shouted laud: "What is this marvelous and most glorious miracle!" As for the men who carried the casket, they barely managed to hold it up so that the horsemen and the rest of the people catch up with them. Then they set out anew. At about half of a *poprishte* distance, in the place called Varbitsa, down the confluence of two great rivers, the already mentioned Rila and the so called Iliina, they were met by the brethren who had remained in the monastery and who now came out

carrying icons and banners. All the brethren having gathered together, they began singing divine songs and kissed the saint and each other. Then they entered the monastery together, carried the saint to his church and with great honors and singing laid him there, in the place prepared for him, in the year 6977 [1469] second *indiction*, June 30. To this very day his sweet-smelling relics resting there are the source of a constantly flowing stream of free cures for those who with warm faith have recourse to them. After they performed the all-night vigils and celebrated the day, [the monks] decreed that from now on every year on July 1, together with honoring the memory of the selfless saints Kosmas and Damian, there should be a vigil in the church of the venerable to commemorate solemnly the return of the honorable relics of St John. They also decreed that his praise should be sung every Thursday.

This having been accomplished, they informed the pious tsarina Lady Maria about the saint and his holy journey. When she read the letter and learned about the coming of the saint, she and her nobles rejoiced much and wrote back with thanks, saying: "I thank my Lord God that in our days the saint came back." She gave the messenger an expensive cover for the casket of the saint and for the greater glory of God, to honor the venerable and for her commemoration.

These are the events that happened to the saint from the beginning to this day. From the time when the holy relics of the saint were transported by the Bulgarian tsar Asen from the metropolitan church of Sredets to Tarnov till now there are two hundred and seventy four years.²⁹⁶ In that year the saint worked various miracles. On his feast day many were cured who had suffered for twelve and more years, afflicted by unclean spirits. Some women who had perforce left their husbands were cured as well and returned to them. For the glory of God the saint continues to cure the people who come to him with faith.

This is how our most worthy of praise father John, truly the great light of the entire world, the bulwark and foundation of the world, the beauty of the desert and the adornment of monasticism was transported from the most glorious city of Tarnov and the land of Zagora to the glorious monastery, which is in the desert of Rila. God designed this to happen in the appropriate way and willed that through his coming the western Bulgarian lands get enlightened and instructed in goodness.

²⁹⁶ Asen I transported the relics most likely in 1195.

Stone Annals, Inscriptions, and Graffiti

Stone inscription of the Great Duke Vranas, likely 1205.

154

The inscription was made by a Byzantine official and testifies to the political alliance between Kaloyan and the Byzantine Greeks in Thrace against the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Editions: *BSM*, 29–30; *AI*, 2, 81.

+ I, Vranas, Great Duke, built the fortress of Kritsuva on the twenty-first day of May on the request of Tsar Kaloyan.

Ioan Asen II's inscription commemorating the battle of Klokotnitsa, 1230.

155

The inscription is carved on the middle column on the northern side of the church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Veliko Tarnovo and celebrates the tsar's great victory over the Emperor of Thessaloniki Theodore Ducas Angelos Comnenos on March 9, 1230, which made Ioan Asen II master of the central Balkans. Edition: *AI*, 2, 166–8.

In the year 6738 [1230] I, Ioan Asen, in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of the Bulgarians, son of the old Tsar Asen, built from the foundations²⁹⁷ and adorned with paintings the whole of this most honorable church in the name of the Holy Forty Martyrs with whose help in the twelfth year of my reign, in the year this temple was being painted, I went to war in Romania²⁹⁸ and routed the Greek army and captured Tsar Theodore Comnenus himself and all of his *boljars*.²⁹⁹ I conquered his entire land, from Adrianopolis to Drach, the Greek [part], as well the Serbian and Albanian parts. The cities round about Constantinople and the City itself were ruled by the Franks but even they obeyed the hand of my tsardom, because they had no other tsar but me and they lived their days thanks to me.³⁰⁰ God ordained it to be so, because without Him neither word nor deed can be accomplished. Glory to Him for all ages! Amen.

²⁹⁷ Ioan Asen II renewed thoroughly the church; it was already standing during the reign of Kaloyan.

²⁹⁸ The European parts of the Byzantine possessions, in this case Thrace. The battle was at Klokotnitsa, then in Theodore Comnenos's domain, because the Bulgarians intercepted the invading Byzantine army.

²⁹⁹ Theodore, although led in captivity, had his "revenge:" Asen married his daughter Irene and let him go to counter the rise of his brother Demetrios in Thessaloniki.

³⁰⁰ As there are no references about formal suzerainty over the Latin Empire, the words of the tsar must refer to a peace treaty with the Franks in Constantinople.

- 156 *Inscription in the name of Ioan Asen II from the fortress of Stanimaka (now Asenovgrad), 1231.*

The inscription is in the tradition of the early Bulgarian triumphal stone annals and documents Ioan Asen's building activity and attempts to consolidate the hold on his new domains in the wake of the successful campaign in Thrace after March 1230. The inscription was destroyed in 1883 and is extant in only in facsimile. Editions: *SBK*, 2, 40; *AI*, 2, 15.

In the year 6379 [1231], fourth *indiction* I, Asen, from God elevated tsar of the Bulgarians and the Greeks, as well as of other countries, installed *sevast* Alexius and built this fortress.

- 157 *Rock inscription from the time of Tsar Michael Asen (1246–1256) from Batoshevo.*

The reign of Ioan Asen II's minor son is marked by a reckless foreign policy and complete domination of the powerful *boljari* in the capital. Seeking the support of the church was quite the only option available to shore up his shaky position, but it came at a price, the alienation of lands and estates, which undermined the tsar's economic and political position. This inscription in the name of the patriarch, most likely Joachim II, although fragmentary (it is extant in three pieces) documents the tsar's handlers' efforts to solidify his hold on the throne by endowing foundations as "tsar's property" or *Eigenkirche*, on whose resources he could draw in time of need. The identification of the patriarch is mine. Edition: Hristo Hristov, "Batoshevskijat nadpis," *Archaeologia* (1978): 4, 65–70; *AI*, 2, 23.

+ [I, Joachim—KP] by God's mercy patriarch of all Bulgarians... in the time of my governance and with God's help carved out the mountain in this desert and created a temple in the name of the most holy Mother of God of Matorie and the holy evangelist John the Theologian and pleaded with the great Tsar [Michael Asen], son of the great Tsar [Ioan] Asen, and grandson of the old Tsar Asen... this monastery was not only for him, but I also decreed... and it is tsar's monastery. Tsar Michael [Asen] took with love this monastery and granted to it the village of... Batoshevo, Viten, and Ribare... Tsar Michael [Asen] and the future tsars, if they happen to grant... Tsar Michael himself, the donor...

... goes against... this place... as *epidosis*,³⁰¹ then it should be given to the monastery for eternity...

³⁰¹ Addition.

...hamlets and villages....but guests....wherever it might be....the monastery should remain tsar's monastery....If the donors....all, tsars or high clerics....

Stone inscription of Tsar Michael Asen (?) from the fortress of Krichim (1254?) 158
The inscription has been attributed to Ioan Asen II's campaign referred to in the inscription of Stanimaka; a more convincing alternative reading attributes it to his son, Michael Asen, and the Byzantine-Bulgarian war of 1254. Editions: *SBK*, 2, 40; *AI*, 2, 85.

+ On this rock sat Tsar Asen when he took Krichim.

Stone inscription of Tsar Michael Asen (1246–1256), village of Rojak, northeastern Bulgaria, 1252–3. 159

The inscription documents both the young tsar's support of the ecclesiastical foundations and the complications in the inheritance system of thirteenth-century Bulgaria, reflected in his title. Editions: Ara Margos, "Srednovkovnite balgarski nadpisi pri selo Rojak, Provadijsko," *Balgarski Ezik* 4 (1976), 299; *AI*, 2, 119.

+ This holy foundation in the names of....was built under the born in the purple, faithful, and Christ-loving autocrat Tsar Michael in the year 6761 [1252–1253].

Dedication of the church of St St Nicholas and Andreas, village of Troica, district of Shumen. 160
Edition: *AI*, 2, 147–8.

+ This temple of St Nicolas and the martyr St Andreas was erected by Sava, by God's grace metropolitan of Preslav, the God-protected city of the first throne, under the faithful and Christ-loving Tsar Constantine, autocrat of all Bulgarians, and his pious Tsarina Irene, and the blessed patriarch of the God-protected city of Tarnov and all Bulgarians, Joachim. In the year 6772 [1263/64], seventh *indiction*.

Inscription from the fortress of Shumen, second half of the thirteenth century. 161
This thirteenth-century graffiti from the wall of the fortress of Shumen, a formidable fortress, documents the terror that frequent Mongol incursions in northeastern Bulgaria inspired in the local population. Editions: Ara Margos, "Za novootrkitija starobalgarski nadpis v Shumenskata krepost," *Archeologia*, (1969), 1, 23; *AI*, 2, 131.

I, George, looked up and down and said: God, in Your name, deliver us from the Tatars!

- 162 *Graffiti by craftsmen, Kalugeritsa, northwestern Bulgaria, thirteenth century.*
Inscriptions like these indicate wide-spread literacy among late medieval Bulgarians of all walks of life. Editions: *SBK*, 2, 288; *AI*, 2, 77.

I, Yano goldsmith.

+ I, Yano, smith, wrote in the month of April. This road was covered [with rocks], but I shattered [them] with an iron cotter and an iron cleat.

I, Dragaina, goldsmith, son of Yano.

Ioan blacksmith

- 163 *Graffiti from 1291–1305, Ivanovo rock monastery, district of Ruse.*
Editions: Jordan Andreev, “Nadpisite ot selo Ivanovo, Rusensko, i poslednite godini ot zhivota na tsar Georgi Terter I,” *Vekove* (1975), 77–84; *AI*, 2, 65–8.

Damian wrote this in the years of Tsar George [I Terter], in the year 6799 [1290–1291].

I, George

I, Rad from Kalugerovo

I, Rad wrote [this] on [the feast day of] St George

I, Ivo the Grammarian, wrote these words when Tsar George [I Terter] perished³⁰² and I came from Romania³⁰³ and could not get back because of the danger and [fled?] to the [monastery of the] “Archangels” and I was in a very sorrowful state. May God save the *archimandrite* Dionisius who took pity on me; because of his goodness I bequeathed to him my horse.

- 164 *Donor’s inscription from the church in Kavadartsi, fourteenth century.*
The donor of this church was a member of a Bulgarian noble family a scion of which, Smilets, became tsar in 1292–1298, during a time marked by Mongol supremacy in the European southeast. The donor’s father, despot Altimir, was a grandson of Smilets. Ioan Dragushin, judging by his name, was of mixed Bulgarian-Serbian progeny. After the brief rule of a Mongol warlord and the re-establishing of Bulgarian sovereignty by the rival Terter dynasty under Todor Svetoslav (1301–1322) the clan either relocated or withdrew in the southwest, in territories dominated by the rising power of Serbia. The

³⁰² I.e., soon after 1292.

³⁰³ Thrace.

inscription is from the church of St George in Kavadartsi, on the right bank of the river Tchernia, a territory then under Serbian rule. The king referred to is Stephen Dushan. Editions: Tsvetan Grozdanov and Dimitar Tornakov, “Istorijski portreti u Poloshkom,” *Žograph*, 4 (1983), 60–66; Christo Matanov, “Novi svedenija za rodstevenitsi na despot Eltimir/Altemir,” *Trudove na Nauchnija Centar Ivan Dujchev* (Sofia, 1990), 107–113.

Ioan Dragushin servant of God, son of Despot Altimir, true brother of the most high king and our lord presented himself [to God]

Building inscription of protosevast Hreljio, Rila monastery, 1335.

165

Protosevast Hreljio was a semi-independent Bulgarian magnate in control of the region along the river Struma in the first half of the fourteenth century. He carved out his principality on Bulgarian territory that the tsars in Tarnovo had no means to control and that during this period was disputed between Serbia and Byzantium. Through skillful maneuvers between the two powers Hreljio consolidated his domain and legitimized his position with the titles of *protosevast* (from Serbia) and *caesar* (from Byzantium). His last bid for independence backfired when, in the 1340s, Hreljio renounced Serbian overlordship and forged an alliance with John Kantakuzenos, then a contender for the Byzantine throne. In 1342, however, Kantakuzenos made peace with the Serbian king Stephan Dushan and Hreljio had to acknowledge, once again, Dushan as his suzerain. Dushan soon forced Hreljio to don the monastic habit and retire to the Rila monastery where, a year later, on December 27, 1342, he had him murdered. Hreljio had retired to Rila for it was considered his *zadushbina* or a foundation built or renovated for his soul. In the 1330s he rebuilt it and had a new stone church and a defensive tower erected for its protection. The church was demolished in 1834 but the tower still stands. The inscription notes its construction as part of Hreljio’s massive rebuilding program, and dedicates it to St John of Rila and the Mother of God called Osenovitsa. Editions: Jordan Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski i negovijat monastir* (Sofia, 1917), 143; *AI*, 2, 115.

+ Under the rule of the Most High Lord King Stephen Dushan this tower was built by *protosevast* Hreljio with great effort and at much expense for the holy father John of Rila and the Mother of God called Osenovitsa in the year 6843 [1335], fifth *indiction*.

Tomb inscription of Caesar Hreljio, Rila monastery, 1343.

166

The inscription was made by the monastic community to commemorate their murdered benefactor; see No. 165 above. The monks and the widow of the *caesar* extol Hreljio as a generous, honorable, and pious man. Hreljio’s second name, Dragovol, is used along with his official name and his monastic pseudonym, Hariton. Editions: Ivanov, *Sv. Ivan Rilski i negovijat monastir*, 145; *AI*, 2, 112.

[The grave holds you now oh] murdered *caesar*, who yesterday talked to us with a clear voice. Oh, [terrible mi]racle, [oh most glorious portent!] You, an honorable man of great reputation, shone like the sun with your goodness. Now you lay dead in the small grave. Oh, oh, how do you lay, without speaking, with a mangled face, and without sight; your soul has left you. Your death is double suffering, [oh *caesar*, worthy of great praise] for the *caesareess*, your spouse, who weeps and wails bitterly [obsessed with] grief for she cannot see you, her sweetheart, next to her. Behold this, brothers, and pay diligent honor to the one who now lies here; who was so great in one thing or another, and now is squeezed in the narrow grave; emulate in everything his good life. In the year 6851 [1343], eleventh *indiction*, in the month of December, on the twenty-seventh day, died the glorious *Caesar* Hrelijo Dragovol, in monastic image [called Ha]riton, [benefactor of this foundation].

167 *Inscriptions on the silver frame of the icon of Mary Mother of God from Nesebar, ca. 1341.*

Edition: Todor Gerasimov, "Novootkrit nadpis varhu ikonata 'Bogoroditsa Umilenie' ot Nesebar," *Izvestija na narodnija muzei-Burgas*, 1 (1950), 253–6.

- I. In the reign of the most pious and great Tsar Ioan Alexander and his son, the most pious Tsar Michael Asen, with love and zeal I attached this decoration worked in gold and silver to this most glorious and divine icon of the Mother of God.
- II. In the year 6850 [1341/42] I, the beloved natural uncle of the most high Tsar Ioan Alexander, renewed the most honorable and divine temple of the most blessed Lady of ours, the Mother of God Speleotisa.
- III. To the monastery of the Holy [Mother of God] belong: a Gospel with ornamentation; a silver censer with a cap; three gold-rimmed *talirs* with covers; other *talirs* and an *epatrahil* embroidered with pearls; a *discos*; a *potera*; a stand; silver pincers; two gold-rimmed unattached sleeves; a cover [embroidered] with pearls; seven deacon's mantles. And if someone touches the gold, or the silver, or the books, or if someone steals something from them, let him be reached by the curse of the three hundred and eighteen God-carrying Fathers [of Nicaea and let his] fate be like that of the traitor Judas, be it a patriarch, a metropolitan, or an elder, or a powerful [person] or some of those visiting [the monastery].

In the reign of Ioan Alexander and Michael Asen their beloved uncle Samuel... granted this hammered wreath.

Tomb inscription of Ioan Asen IV, Tarnov, most likely 1349/50.

168

The inscription documents a traumatic event in the royal family, the death of Ioan Asen IV (before 1327/8–1349/50), Ioan Alexander's third son from the marriage with the Vlach princess Theodora. The "young tsar," then in his early twenties, led a military force to halt the early Ottoman depredations in Bulgarian Thrace. The expedition was a disaster. The Bulgarians were routed somewhere in the district of Sofia and Ioan Asen IV perished; soon after a similar encounter had ended with the death of his elder brother Michael Asen. The inscription is fragmentary and subject to amendments since the slab was split vertically and about one third of it is missing. The editor's attribution to 1388 is arbitrary and resulted from a wrong assumption about the length of the lost text. Edition: Ivan Goshev, *Tarnovski tsarski nadgroben nadpis ot 1388 godina* (Sofia, 1945), 7–8.

+ I...pious and Christ-loving...
 [daughter-in]-law of the most great Tsar Ioan Alexander...
 niece of the great voe[voda]...
 tsar of the Bulgarians Asen cam[e]...
 and found the Bulgarian land...
 [pollu]ted by the Ishmae[lites]...
 my lord tsar in the eighteenth year...
 by the will of God set out to...
 [but?] moved because of the yoke...
 gathered my lord tsar with God's po[wer]...
 Asen who about our beautiful faith...
 and strenghtening it, remained in God's church...
 from this life...
 gathered my children before the decea[sed]...
 [Ke]ra and the other Asen, and God...
 and the lord tsar his father...
 and the two girls in the ye[ar]...

Stone inscription from the time of Ioan Alexander by his nephew, 1356/7, fortress of Yambol.

169

The inscription documents an otherwise unknown member of the royal family and perhaps a redistribution of apanages in view of the continuing Ottoman raids in the south of the country. Edition: Ivan Galabov, "Yambolskijat nadpis," in *Ezikovedsko-etnografski izsledvanija v pamet na akademik Stojan Romanski* (Sofia, 1960), 421–2.

In the days of the faithful Tsar Ioan Alexander the son of his brother Michael, lord Shishman, put this column at Dabilin.³⁰⁴ The year was 6865 [1356–7]. If someone destroys it let him be cursed by God and the three hundred and eighteen God-carrying Fathers [of Nicaea].

- 170 *Royal entry inscription in the name of Tsar Ioan Shishman (1371–1395), fortress of Shumen, northeastern Bulgaria.*

The inscription records a “royal entry,” an event familiar from the Western European ceremonial tradition, but it must also be placed against the background of Shishman’s attempts to strengthen his major strongholds in the face of the mounting Ottoman threat north of Hemus/Stara Planina. Edition: Vera Antonova, “Novootkrit starobalgarski nadpis na Shumenskata krepost,” *Izvestija na Narodnija Muzej Shumen* 4 (1967), 81–2.

+ ...placed by God I, Ioan Shishman, tsar of the Bulgarians, son of the great Tsar Ioan Alexander, came to the city of Shumen, on the tsar’s wish and in the name of the heavenly Tsar Christ. And I, Sratso, grandson of the great *epikernius* Sratsimir, wrote these words.

- 171 *Rock inscription of sevast Ognjan, fortress of Bozhentsi, end of the fourteenth century (1380–1390s).*

This short inscription records the last stand of *sevast* Ognjan, one of Shishman’s few loyal officials. Former city governor, possibly of Sofia, Ognjan retreated to the stronghold of Bozhentsi and continued his doomed resistance. The inscription must have been made before the fortress was taken by assault by the Ottomans and burned down, but not before Ognjan refused an offer to convert and surrender, a decision of which he was proud and which he thought worthy of being incised in stone. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 289.

I, Dragomir, wrote. I, Sevast Ognjan, was *kephalia* under Tsar Shishman and suffered much evil. In this time the Turks waged war. I held to the faith of Tsar Shishman.

- 172 *Inscription on Tsar George Terter II’s (1322–1323) gilded cross, monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos, fourteenth century.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 19–20.

+ The barbarian hordes are terrified by the sign of the cross because it vanquishes them and drives them away. [Oh] trice-blessed and trice-beloved three, be protector in war and succor in time of trouble to the

³⁰⁴ Modern Yambol in Bulgarian Thrace.

ruling among the tsars George Terter [II], [you] who are the power of the tsars and the fortress of the faithful.

Graffiti from Targovishte, thirteenth-fourteenth century. 173

Edition: *AI*, 2, 41.

I, Radoslav wrote as... I went to Gerilovo for the cakes.

Tomb inscription from the fortress of Tcherven, thirteenth century. 174

Edition: *AI*, 2, 45.

+ I [Iane?] on this day put up a cross for Maria the spouse of Asen, Tsar of Tarnov.

Stone receipt of a sale, village of Gorno Novkovo, northeastern Bulgaria, 1281–1282. 175

This extremely interesting inscription is in fact the only original sales receipt we have from the medieval period. Edition: *AI*, 2, 55.

+ In the year 6790 [1281–1282 AD] I, Pagan, gave to Hinat the forest that lies on the other side of this stone.

Tomb inscriptions from Gradets, northwestern Bulgaria, fourteenth century. 176

Edition: *AI*, 2, 59–61.

+ On the fifteenth day of the month of November the servant of God Stanislava, daughter of Novak and spouse of the *bolijar* Dragushin passed away. Remember her among the dead.

+ In the month of December died the servant of God Stanislav. Whoever reads, remember him [and may] God forgive him.

Graffiti from the village of Nevsha, district of Varna, northeastern Bulgaria, thirteenth century. 177

Edition: *AI*, 2, 91.

I, Hinat the Grammarian wrote this...

Inscriptions on tableware, Nicopolis, thirteenth century. 178

Edition: *AI*, 2, 95.

Vladimir's spoon

Balin

Spoon from the stock of Balin

- 179 *Tomb inscription from the church of the Holy Mother of God in Ohrid (modern Macedonia), fourteenth century.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 98.

+ Ostoja Raikovic, servant of God, relative of King Marko and son-in-law of *župan* Grupa, presented himself [to God]... in the year 6888 [1379] in the month of October, on the tenth day, third *indiction*. I beg you my beloved brothers who read [this] forgive the servant of God for you will become like me but I will never be like you.

- 180 *Graffiti from Preslav about Coumans, late twelfth or early thirteenth century.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 105.

December 28th

January 13th

March 6th

[month] 10th

10,300 Coumans

[Help?] God

- 181 *Building inscriptions from the monastery church of St George in Staro Nagorichene, modern Macedonia, from the time of Urosh Milutin (1282–1321).*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 122–3.

+ This home of the holy and most glorious martyr George was built by the will of God in the days of the holy-born and most high King Urosh Milutin, by God autocrat of all the land of Serbia and Pomorie, his pious Tsarina Simonida, and Abbot Anthony in the year 6821 [1313 AD].

+ By the will of God this honorable temple was built from the foundations and decorated with every benefaction of the most high King Stephan Urosh in the year 6826 [1318 AD] under Abbot Benjamin +

- 182 *Graffiti from the church and walls of the fortress of Shumen, northeastern Bulgaria, thirteenth–fifteenth centuries.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 129–33.

I, Vlad Tjatov, godfather of ... daughter of ...

I, Ioan wrote on the day of ...

I, Grchin wrote to be read ...

Branko wrote...

+ By the will and assistance of God this temple of the most pure Mother of God was built.

I, the most sinful Stojan, wrote these words above the door of the Most Pure. Lord my God have mercy on me when I come to Your Kingdom. I wrote in the year 6923 [1415 AD] in the days of Tsar Sultan. Most Pure God help... Your sinful servant... to be cursed... amen.

Tomb inscription from the church of the monastery of the Mother of God, Treska, modern Macedonia, fourteenth century. 183
Edition: *AI*, 2, 138.

Why are you marveling, humans, when you see me in the grave? Look, for you too will be like this. Remember me with love, and mention me [in your prayers]. Maria otherwise called Velislava, servant of God, presented [herself to God] in the month of September, 28th day, in the year 6881 [1372 AD].

Graffiti on the wall of the church in Osmarski Kolonii, Troitsa, northeastern Bulgaria, fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. 184
Edition: *AI*, 2, 150.

+ I, Andreas the Grammarian, wrote in the month of April.

Building inscription from Turnu Măgurele, modern Roumania, from the reign of Bayazid I Ildirim (1389–1402). 185
Edition: *AI*, 2, 152.

+ This town of Holavnik was rebuilt under Tsar Ildirim Bayazid and under the *subashi*...

Inscription on sevast Berislav's bronze procession cross, Veliko Tarnovo, thirteenth century. 186
Sevast Berislav is not mentioned elsewhere. Edition: *AI*, 2, 173.

St Constantine of Constantinople help sevast Berislav.

Stone inscription from Tsarevets, Veliko Tarnovo, thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. 187
Edition: *AI*, 2, 181.

My father gave birth to me, I gave birth to my wife, my wife gave birth to my children, and my children gave birth to my father.

- 188 *Proper names in graffiti from Tsarevets, Veliko Tarnovo, thirteenth-fourteenth centuries.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 192–3.

Gago, Barko, Brato, Dimitar, Ivanko, Dvorko, Paraskeve, Hrabro Kurt, Svarog, Rada, Theodosius

- 189 *Grffiti on pottery belonging to the royal family, Tsarevets, Veliko Tarnovo, fourteenth century.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 193.

+ Theodora

+ Ioan Alexander

- 190 *Bilingual Bulgarian-Armenian inscription on the north side of the monastery church of Vitovnitsa, modern Serbia, 1218.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 199.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I, Lado, son of Babug, built this temple of God in the memory of the apostles Jacob and Peter in the year 6726 [1218 AD], sixth *indiction*.

- 191 *Tomb inscription from the reign of Tsar Ioan Sratsimir (1356–1397), Zaechar, modern Serbia.*

Edition: *AI*, 2, 209.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the days of Tsar Sratsimir, George servant of God called Hrab presented [myself to God] in the month of July, on the 27th day. Brothers and fathers forgive and bless and remember me Hrab servant of God, and God [will remember] you.

Annals, Historical Records, and Marginal Notes with Historical Content

- 192 *Historical account about the restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchy in 1235, last quarter of the thirteenth century (Athon-Vatoped Account).*

This anonymous account, considerably later than the events it purports to describe, represents the position of the monks of Mount Athos on the complications which arose in the 1230s after Ioan Asen II's conquests in Thrace and northern Greece and the expansion of the diocese of the newly restored Bulgarian patriarchy. Edition: Ph. Mayer, *Die Haupturkunde für die Geschichte der Athosklöster* (Leipzig, 1894), 187–9.

Description of the events under Lord Ioan Asen,³⁰⁵ who reigned in Zagora and held many fortresses of the Byzantines as well.

Because he insisted that a patriarch was installed in his country and stubbornly tried to accomplish this, it was decided, after he received the assent of the church, that a local patriarchy was established in Zagora. The former metropolitan of Philippi Gregorius was elected its first patriarch.³⁰⁶ Against the canons of the church he ordained a metropolitan for Thessaloniki and made everything possible to install a bishop in Jeriso as well, wishing to deprive [the bishop of] Thessaloniki Michael Bratan, whom he had ordained of his rights in that bishopric. But the metropolitan of Thessaloniki would not let go of his rights and sent to the tsar [Ioan Asen II] to complain of his patriarch. Then, the monks who accomplished virtuous deeds in the Holy Mount, God's chosen in the number of three thousand, all of them accomplished in the faith, neither recognized the patriarch, nor gave their assent to the ordaining of a bishop in Jeriso, be it by that patriarch or by the metropolitan Bratan. For that reason they too went to see the tsar, who at that time was in Galipoli. He was celebrating the marriage of his daughter Elena to the son of the now resting in blessed peace Emperor [John] Ducas Vatatzes.³⁰⁷ The Constantinopolitan Patriarch Manuel, the former metropolitan of Ephesus, was there as well. The complaint [of the monks] against the patriarch of Zagora and the metropolitan of Thessaloniki was put before the two rulers. As the patriarch of Constantinople strongly supported them, recalling [their] other privileges, as well as the decree, issued long time ago and sealed with red wax, of the resting in blessed peace among the emperors Lord Alexius Comnenus, the monks were deemed within their rights. The patriarch of Constantinople, together with the council of the high priests, which resided there honored the contents of the above

³⁰⁵ Tsar Ioan Asen II (1218–1241).

³⁰⁶ Incorrect, the first patriarch was Ioachim I (1235–1246).

³⁰⁷ John Ducas Vatatzes (1222–1254), emperor of Nicaea. The event described here is the political alliance between Nicaea and Bulgaria sealed with the marriage of Theodore II Lascaris, heir to the throne, and Elena, Asen's daughter. The Bulgarian condition was the restoration of the Bulgarian patriarchy. Once this was accomplished in 1235, however, the new patriarch got involved in the very complicated administration of the lands conquered by Ioan Asen II in 1230 after the battle of Klokotnitsa, and the problem with the canonical status of the bishops and metropolitans installed while the Bulgarian Church was still in union with Rome. The monks of Mount Athos found themselves in the middle of the ensuing controversy and the account was composed to defend their ecclesiastical sovereignty.

mentioned imperial decree and declared that the bishop of Jeriso had no canonical rights over the Holy Mount. Also, they declared that the patriarch of Zagora cannot interfere in metropolies that do not belong to his church, to ordain there, or meddle in other ecclesiastical matters. The then metropolitan of Philadelphia Phocas insisted on the unconditional deposition of the patriarch of Zagora. However, as Tsar Asen opposed the deposition of his own patriarch, they decided that it was better to depose the metropolitan of Thessaloniki as someone ordained against the church's canons and without the assent of the patriarch of Constantinople. Immediately thereafter the patriarch, in the presence of and with the agreement of the two rulers ordained as metropolitan of Thessaloniki the holy Manuel Disipatus, who later became a confessor.

The holy synod of the archbishops decided as well that the monks of the Holy Mountain were not subject to anyone and decreed, without depriving the metropolitan of Thessaloniki of his rights, that the bishop of Jeriso was to be appointed by the metropolitan of Thessaloniki, but would have no jurisdiction over Holy Mount's holy monasteries. If there was any need of sacred service or of church consecration the bishop could go if invited, but on the condition that he kept to the above mentioned synodal decision. If the monks noticed that he went against these decisions, then the sacred services in the said monasteries in the Holy Mount were to be performed by other high priests on the order of the blessed head of Holy Mount.

After that there were warnings of excommunication and subjection to anathema in case of breaking and disregarding anything of what had solemnly been decided. The decisions were testified to and confirmed with the signatures of the patriarch of Constantinople and the present high priests. The two rulers, after having ratified them with their own signatures, made with red ink, ordered that they applied for all times, as the Great Logothete George Acropolit explains in his work, which begins with the capture of Constantinople by the Latins.

- 193 *Historical account of the translation of the relics of St Petka from Kalikratia to Tarnovo, most likely from the 1230s.*

The account of the translation of the relics of St Petka, who became the reigning city's patron saints, was composed some time soon after the translation in 1228 and before 1241, the death of Ioan Asen II. Besides eulogizing the saint, the anonymous author leaves his immediate impression of the balance of political power in southeastern Europe and some details about the restoration of the Bulgarian patriarchy in 1235. Edition: Stephan Kozhuharov,

“Neizvesten letopisen razkaz ot vremeto na Ioan Asen II,” *Literaturna misal* 2 (1974), 126–9.

After this Tsar Roman³⁰⁸ and the other Orthodox [tsars] who reigned in Constantinople the saint became famous and much revered. Good news about her spread all over the Greek land. From far and near every one came to bow to the splendid [lady] and witness the many miracles that occurred at her body. With God’s grace the blind saw again, the lame and the deaf and the possessed were healed and every one who came with faith and was bound up by the chain of suffering and by different afflictions became whole again. Who can account for all the miracles that God granted to the saint!

However, under the power of the Latins,³⁰⁹ after the destruction of the good reverence that the faithful had to the saints, including the great reverence to the venerable St Petka, by God’s will the saint’s fame and honor did not remain in darkness. God put it in the heart of our faithful and pious and God-fearing tsar who reigned over the entire Bulgarian land, Ioan the young Asen, the son of the former Tsar Asen the Older,³¹⁰ to request the venerable St Petka, because there were Latins there at that time. Even though they held Constantinople, they very much feared and honored and obeyed the words that Tsar Asen uttered for, I think, it was because of him that they were still in power. Had he requested from them gold, or silver, or precious stones, or pearls, they would have given it to him. He did not, however, request something of transient value, but wanted the saint, the most pure and imperishable, for she is immeasurably more precious than gold, silver, and the like. By requesting the deliverer, he requested the better thing for himself: honor, and praise, and joy, and delight, and invincible help, and strength for his tsardom not only in this age, but in the future one as well. He then ordered her body to be transported with great honor from Kalikratia to his most glorious city of Tarnov. This happened during the time of the metropolitan Mark³¹¹ who arranged for the transportation of the body of the saint. Her reception by the tsar and those subjected to his power was a grandiose affair. With glory and great honor, with joy and

³⁰⁸ Emperor Roman III Argiros (1028–1034) or Emperor Roman IV Diogenes (1068–1071).

³⁰⁹ The Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204–1261).

³¹⁰ Ioan Asen II (1218–1241) the son of Asen I (1186–1196).

³¹¹ Mark was metropolitan bishop of Preslav and the senior Bulgarian prelate at the time.

delight she was laid to rest in his church. [The tsar] offered honor and reverence to the saint for the greater glory of God, who deemed him worthy of receiving such a grace.

In the same year in which the patriarch died³¹² the faithful tsar sent his spiritual father, the most humble and venerable in the honey-sweet doctrine monk Joachim to cross over from Constantinople to Great Nicaea to be ordained as high priest.³¹³ As he went through Kalikratia, he obtained a service in the memory of the saint, with a panegyric and a *Life* for her day, from which we translated so that we sing the praises of the saint and laud her with the appropriate tribute rather than eulogizing her, the venerable, while calling her a “martyr.” Because there is another martyr in Christ, whose service and eulogy can be found everywhere. As for this one, it was difficult to offer her the acclaim her glory deserves but we did what we could.

And so, let us say, just like parents delight in receiving praise [for their children, do accept oh Lord] this small eulogy which we offer from the bottom of our hearts and grant us, we beg You, peace in our life, wellbeing to the churches, and strength and power to our tsar against his enemies. Guard and protect his *bolijars*, his soldiers, and the people whom God put under his power, through the power of the cross and on account of the prayers of our most holy Lady, the Mother of God, and of all the saints who suffered because of Christ and received from the hand of the Lord imperishable wreaths and the Kingdom of Heaven, for which may the Lord deem us worthy as well. To Him glory, with the Father without beginning and with the most Holy, meek, and life-creating Spirit.

- 194 *Marginal note about the Mongol invasion of Bulgaria, 1242–1243.*
Edition: Vasil Zlatarski, *Istorija na balgarskata darzava prez srednite vekove*, vol. 3 (Sofia, 1940), 425.

This book was bought for five *perperi* by Theodore the Grammarian after the invasion of the godless Tartars, when Kaliman Asen, the son of Ioan Asen, ruled in Bulgaria, in the year 6751 [1242–1243], first

³¹² Primas Basil abdicated some time before 1235 to clear the way for the restoration of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Bulgarian patriarchy. The author might have confused his retirement with his death.

³¹³ Joachim was associated with the court in the mid 1230s, elected archbishop of Tarnov in 1234, and ordained Patriarch of Bulgaria in 1235.

indiction. Those who read: pray for the sinner so that through your prayers I get saved from eternal punishment.

Inscription from Kostur, southwestern Bulgaria.

195

The inscription documents the continuing presence of Bulgarian power in the southwest of the country in the 1240s–1250s and the position of the Queen-mother Irene as regent for her minor son Michael Asen. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 277.

+ Prayer of the servant of God Michael Asen, son of the great Tsar Asen, and his mother Irene [daughter of] Theodore Comnenus.

Armenian historical note from 1258.

196

This short note by an Armenian priest from the capital of Tarnov illustrates both its multinational character and the turbulent politics in the middle of the thirteenth century, when the direct line of the Assenid dynasty became extinct after a quick succession of underage rulers, and a collateral branch came to power at a time when the real lords of the country were not the Bulgarian tsars but the Mongols of the Golden Horde. Edition: Ara Margos, “Deux sources arméniens du XIII^e siècle concernant certains événements historiques du Second Empire bulgare,” *Etudes Balkaniques* 2–3 (1965), 295.

In the name of God I, Arakel, come from Tarnov, where I was consecrated as priest in the year 707 [1258] according to the Armenian calendar on a day in May, and was ordained on June twenty-sixth, which makes sixty days from the time I was consecrated to the ordination. That happened during the time of the Bulgarian Tsar Constantine Asen who inherited from Lord Michael, the son of Ioan [Asen II], [who was] killed by Kaliman, the son of his uncle. During my consecration I was assisted by Kali and his brother Hannes, who gave two *groshes* for the remembrance of their souls and these of their parents, Korki and Hrapia.

Marginal notes in the Psalter of Bologna, thirteenth century.

197

Edition: Ivan Dujchev, *Bolonski psaltir: balgarski knizhoven pametnik ot XIII vek* (Sofia, 1968).

Remember, Lord, your servants Joseph and Tihota, who with God’s help and with that of the most holy Virgin and Mother of God Mary copied this book. This is written down in the city of Ohrid, in the village called Ravne, under the Bulgarian Tsar Asen.

I, Daniel, hieromonk and a sinner, bought this book from Theodore the Grammarian of Ravne and gave [for it] the gilded earrings of the priestess³¹⁴ and two *perpera* in the middle of the town of Bitolja.

- 198 *Inscription in the church of Boyana, district of Sofia, 1258–59.*
Sebastocrator Kaloyan, the donor of the church, was most likely the son of Alexander, the younger brother of Ioan Asen II, and an unknown Serbian princess. He was thus related to both Tsar Constantine Asen (1257–1277) and the Serbian royal dynasty, and this allowed him to weather well the tumultuous 1240s and 1250s while remaining in control of sufficient resources to sponsor one of the most magnificent examples of Bulgarian medieval art, the wall paintings in the church of Boyana, close to Sredets. Edition: Vasil Zlatarski, “Boyanskijat nadpis,” *Godishnik na Sofijskija Universitet Kliment Ohridski, Istoriko-Filologicheski Fakultet* vol. 81 (1935), 5.

This most pure temple of the holy priest of Christ Nicholas and the holy and most glorious martyr of Christ Panteleimon was elevated from the ground and built with the diligence, labors, and great love of *Sebastocrator* Kaloyan, cousin of the tsar and grandson of St Steven, the king of Serbia. It was written [i.e. painted] under the Bulgarian tsardom under the faithful, pious, and Christ-loving Tsar Constantine Asen in the year 6767 [1258–1259], seventh *indiction*.

- 199 *Scribal note and letter of Despot Jacob Svetoslav, Russian noble in Bulgarian service, 1262.*
 Jacob Svetoslav was an adventurous Russian noble who settled in Bulgaria in the 1250s and ingratiated himself with the young Tsar Michael Asen, whose mother Irene, a Byzantine, was in dire need of independent support. Granted the title of *despot*, he became the tsar’s father-in-law and a leading figure at the court of Tarnov. He represented the Bulgarian side at the peace negotiations following Michael Asen’s successful campaign in Thrace in 1256. Bribe by the Byzantines, he accepted the worst possible conditions and had to leave the country in haste for his greed precipitated the murder of Michael Asen and the brief coming to power of his cousin Kaliman II (1257) and then Constantine Asen (1257–1277). This note indicates that although the parting might not have been amicable, literary connections were still maintained, and Svetoslav drew on his Bulgarian acquaintances to procure a copy of a canon law collection, known as *Zonara* for the archbishopric of Kiev. Edition: Angelov, *Iz starata literatura*, II, 142–3.

[Scribal note]

³¹⁴ His wife: Orthodox priests were allowed to marry.

By the will of the Father, with the deed of the Son, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and with the help of the holy and most pure Lady of ours, the Mother of God and forever Virgin Mary, and the holy and blessed Fathers who established for us the holy rules of the oecumenical and local councils in the time and when they convened, arranged, and made legal our righteous faith, and bequeathed and left to us on account of our innumerable sins [the words] of God as handed down in the apostolic tradition, which shine brighter than the sun.

This *Zonara* was copied in the year 6770 [1262], in the days of the faithful Tsar Constantine who ruled over the Bulgarian throne, on the order of and with remuneration from the great lord Jacob Svetoslav, Bulgarian *despot*. We wrote it, dividing it in three parts, in fifty days. It was started on the tenth day of the month of November and was completed on the seventh day of January. As for myself, the small-brained and very sinful Ioan called Dragoslav, I beg through tears: Fathers and brothers who will read and copy, correct me with lenience, read and do not criticize, for I am not much of a scribe. Mostly bless and remember. May Christ deem all of us worthy to stand at his right side at the Last Judgment and the Second Coming together with all those who have pleased Him since the inception of the world! To Him all glory, honor, and submission are due. With the Father without beginning and His Son of the same Essence, and with the most Holy and life-giving Spirit, always and for all centuries, amen!

[Letter of Jacob Svetoslav]

To Cyril, shepherd and teacher of the speech-endowed flock of our righteous faith, my father in the Holy Spirit chosen from God, and most sacred archbishop of the most glorious city of Kiev. Holy metropolitan: when I received your letter my lordship thanked your blessedness in Christ. I thanked you for your holy prayer, oh most sacred archbishop of the entire Russian land, the land of my stately family and my holy great-grandfathers, of which I am the sap and root. I am writing to you my beloved Cyril, by God's [will] first among the [bishops'] sees, so that through your word the Russian universe gets enlightened. With this letter [I request] that this *Zonara* is not copied anywhere else for, as the Holy Fathers established, solely archbishoprics are to have a *Zonara*. For that reason I begged the patriarch [of Bulgaria] for it and paid for it for the benefit of my deceased parents and for the memory of my soul. And when you raise your blessed hands to pray, do not forget me. That is why I am writing to you, my beloved archbishop of

the entire Russian land. May my letter be pleasing to Your Grace and the Lord blesses [me] for you know the contents of the divine grace. Peace be upon you in the Lord, most sacred and most beloved and honorable archbishop.

200 *Historical account of the Zograph martyrs, 1275.*

The account commemorates the death of twenty-one Bulgarian monks and four laymen in the Bulgarian foundation of Zograph on Mount Athos, who were attacked and burned alive by a band of Western fighters in the tower built by Ioan Asen II. The attack was provoked by the monks' staunch resistance to the union of Lyons of July 1275 and Zograph's refusal to admit within its premises Latin Catholic clergy that had been sent to inspect their adherence to the union. Michael VIII decided to make an example of them and sent his mercenaries to break the monk's resistance. There is no agreement on the date of the text; Konstantin Radchenko argued for the fourteenth-century, while most other scholars think that the author must have been contemporary of the events he described. The account is the first Bulgarian case of hagiographical writing dedicated to domestic martyrs. Edition: *BSM*, 438–40.

When the impious and empty-worded Mateologue³¹⁵ who was of one mind with the Latins reigned over the Greeks, the Latins of Italy and Rome set out to come to Constantinople to that just mentioned fellow of theirs, Paleologos. Along the way they waged war against those who dwelled on Mount Athos, called also the Holy Mount on account of the virtuous and God-dedicated lives of its denizens, and also because it has been chosen among many other places to be the residence of the most holy and most pure Mother of God.

The Latins waged war, as mentioned, against others as well and after that came to the monastery of the holy and glorious great martyr and good victor George, called Zograph. And because the monks did not let the Latins in the monastery, they forced their way in, took it over, and set fire to the tower of Tsar Asen, on the tenth of October in the year of the creation of the world 6784 [1275]. The tower and the church building burned down to the ground and with then burned one hundred and ninety three books, all church vessels and golden *epatrachils*,³¹⁶ the multi-colored curtains, and the rest of the church's belongings, which

³¹⁵ Byzantine Greek: garrulous, speaker of empty words. The pun is on the name of Michael VIII Palaeologue (1261–1282) who was forced to conclude a formal union with the Latin Church to stave off Western pressure for the restoration of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

³¹⁶ Gold-woven strip of cloth worn on the neck of the priest during liturgy.

had been donated by the pious tsars of blessed memory, namely by Tsar St Peter, the great Tsar Ioan Asen, and by Tsar Simeon. Some of the chattels were purloined by the impious [Latins]; others perished in the flames. Along with them were burned twenty-one monks and four laymen. The names of the burned monks are as follows: Thomas, Varsonophius, Cyril, Mihei, Simon, Ilarion, Jacob, Martimian, Kosmas, Job, Cyprian, Sabba, the other Jacob, Sergius, Minas, Joseph, Joanikius, Paul, Antonius, Euthymius, Domentian, and Parthenius. The last one mentioned, the *ecclesiarch* Parthenius, seeing the violent and pitiable death of the brothers as well as his own death approaching, threw himself off the tower, yet did not die right away but lived another thirty days before passing away with the Lord on the eight of November, and crossed over to the eternal and incorruptible life.

Our common enemy who detests good and envies our salvation has not ever ceased to urge all kinds of tsars, princes, and peoples against those who live in piety. This is how he instigated the barbarians against the venerable fathers in the Lavra of St Sabba, who were all killed and whom we commemorate on the twentieth of March.³¹⁷ Then he stirred up the Ethiopians who killed the fathers in Sinai and Raita.³¹⁸ In the same manner now our enemy brought over against the fathers of Zograph the shameless and severe Frankish people who carried out their cruel deeds. It is appropriate, therefore, to mention them, because their death was like that of the martyrs, even though some might dispute this comparison as too daring. If the martyrs died for their faith in Christ, the monks of Zograph too died on account of their God-pleasing life and their faith, for not joining the Latins who use unleavened bread in the communion.³¹⁹ Let us then, call out to them with due reverence: “Oh you living sacrifices, speech-endowed sacrifices, victors over the passions, bearers of the Lord’s wreaths! The earth will not hide you for your memory lives among us who are on earth! Heaven, we hope, will soon admit you. The gates of Paradise will open for you. There you will dwell and there you will enjoy the

³¹⁷ The monks of St Sabba, one of the largest foundations in the vicinity of Jerusalem, were attacked and killed during an Arab incursion in 796.

³¹⁸ The monks of Raita on the Red Sea were persecuted in 373. The monks on Mount Sinai have been attacked many times; the author likely refers to a fifth-century devastation of the foundation.

³¹⁹ The controversy over whether leavened or unleavened bread should be used in communion was one of the major dogmatic and liturgical issues in the schism between the Latin and the Greek Orthodox churches.

three of life, the three of Christ and not the one that caused Adam's fall. Pray, therefore, venerable fathers of ours, so that we too when we leave this very painful world are protected together with you by the waters of peace, in the loins of Abraham [basking] in the undying light, in the lush of Paradise, for your fence the wolves will not scale but ours is weak and temporary and requires many guards for we are not aware of what is in store for us. Pray, therefore, so that this small flock is shielded from the wolves that devastate it, that is, from the daring heresies and the invasions of foreign peoples."

The above-mentioned fathers of ours passed away in the Lord in recent years as it was said, in the year of the creation of the world 6784 [1275], in the month of October, on the tenth day. This was written for [their] memory so that such things do not fall in the darkness of forgetfulness but are remembered always by future generations in all ages. May God, through the prayers of these fathers guard our pious and Orthodox tsars,³²⁰ cast the barbarian nations and all their enemies and foes under their feet, establish peace in the world, and strengthen us in His love.

201 *Marginal note in the Gospel of Svarlig, 1278/9.*

This marginal note is the only evidence for the name of the leader of the peasant revolt that shook Bulgaria in the late 1270s. The success of the revolt, whose leader, the humble swineherd Ivailo, became tsar in 1278, is a unique occurrence in the history of medieval Europe. Edition: Gregory Ilinskij, "Sverlizhkie otrjivki," *Sbornik statej po slavjanovedenju*, 2 (St Petersburg, 1906), 10.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I, Constantine the Reader called Voisil the Grammarian, servant of God, wrote this book for presbyter George, called priest Radoslav, in the town of Svarlig, in the time of Tsar Ivailo and the bishop of Nish Nicodemos, in the year 6787 [1278/79], seventh *indiction*, when the Greeks were besieging the city of Tarnov. I beg you, fathers and brothers whom this book will reach, read and correct and do not speak against myself the poor sinner but rather bless me so that God and His most Holy Mother have mercy on you too. Amen, amen, amen.

³²⁰ The tsars are Constantine Asen (1257–1277) and his heir Michael who was crowned tsar as a minor.

Note of the scribe of the Hludov Paraminik, before 1309.

202

The note, besides indicating the fluctuation of political boundaries in the Bulgarian southwest during the last quarter of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries displays the scribe's unwavering conviction that his modest literary effort is doing God's work. Edition: *SBK* 2, 66–7.

Glory to the Creator and Lord God, who with His wisdom created everything, heaven and earth and the sea and all what is in it. By the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit this book was written by the hand of the most sinful and unworthy to be called servant of God Nicholas, called in the secular life Brata, in the days of the faithful Tsar Lord Andronicos Palaeologos and his son Lord Tsar Michael [IX].³²¹ I wrote this book for my brother, the priest Dedoslav. I beg you, honorable fathers, priests, deacons, and readers, all of you who read this book, read and correct and do not curse. For honey, even when offered on the bark of a bitter tree, is still sweet. In the same way the words of God, even when [put down] in a simple and deficient manner because not the Holy Spirit wrote them, but a sinful hand, are still God's [words], and will save all those who read [them]. And as you complete your business remember me, the sinful one, and my parents, and God shall remember you in this age and the future [ones]. Amen, amen, amen.

Marginal note in the codex of Lovech, before 1331.

203

The note documents the standing of the future Tsar Ioan Alexander as despot in/of Lovetch, a major city controlling one of the main commercial arteries across the Stara Planina passes, and the migration of Bulgarian intelligentsia northward to Vlachia and Moldova in the wake of the Ottoman conquests. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 68–9.

This book was written by the hand of the most sinful monk Pahomius in the God-protected city of Lovech, under the archbishop lord Simeon and the pious *Despot* Alexander and his son Michael Asen, and was brought over in the year 6900 [1392] and renewed by the former bishop of Roman Paul in the monastery of Nemetz in the year 7143 [1634], first of December, under Archbishop Pahomius.

Marginal note of the scribe Stanislav, Prologue from 1330.

204

Besides registering yet another of the political vicissitudes of the Bulgarian-Serbian relations in the fourteenth century and the rise of the Serbian kingdom at the expense of Byzantium and Bulgaria, the note betrays the author's

³²¹ Andronikos II ruled 1282–1328, Michael IX, 1294–1309.

strong sense of time and place in history, a feature characteristic of many a marginal note and testifying to the deeply rooted historical consciousness of the late medieval Bulgarian literati, from the leading figures to the simple scribes. Edition: *BSM*, 161–2.

Glory to the Creator God in all ages, amen! With God's mercy and by the will of the great head of the [heavenly] hierarchy, *archstrategos* Michael, and with the assistance of blessed father Gabriel, I, the servant of God Stanislav, completed this book in the days of the Most High King Stephen Urosh [Dechanski], who was blinded by his father and sent over to Greece. Seven years later he came back and took over the kingdom of the entire Serbian land, Pomorie, [the lands] by the Danube, and [those] by Ovche Polje: not by force, but by God's will. He invaded the Greek land and seized [many] towns and killed the strong Bulgarian Tsar Michael [Shishman]. In the same year, this book was completed in the district of Ovche Polje, in the forest of Zletovo, in the mountain of Lesnovo, in the monastery of the holy *archstrategos* Michael and by the grave of the blessed father Gabriel when *zhupan* Dragoslav ruled over the forest of Zletovo, under Abbot Theodosius and *hieromonk* Sabba, and *hieromonk* Cyril, and monk Daniel, and *economos* German, and the *kelarius* Besarion, and the other brothers. This book was written on the orders of the humble Abbot Theodosius by the hand of the most sinful servant of God Stanislav. Please, fathers and brothers, and all you who read, servants of all ranks, if someone wants to read... [lacuna].

205 *Marginal note in the codex of Parvoslav with translations of St Gregory's sermons, 1350–1360.*

Edition: Elena Kotseva, "Alexandrijsko-Popgerasimovo pismo v balgaskite rakopisi ot vtorata polovina na XIV vek," *Starobalgarska Literatura*, vol. 1 (Sofia, 1971), 380–81.

... Christ, the source from which life-giving water springs out, asked the Samaritan for water, "Woman, give me water to drink and I will give you such a water to drink that you will never be thirsty again." This book too is like a spring. The one who opens it to read with diligence will fill the soul with life-carrying and eternal water and will not be thirsty for all centuries.

But you, most meek lords of mine, three lights and teachers of the universe, Gregory, Basil, and John Chrysostomos, accept this from your servant, the lowly *logothete* Mita, [this] small offering of the superb theologian Gregory, the wise teacher and tutor, the worshipper of the Holy Trinity, the destroyer of Its enemies, and the antagonist of heresies.

This book was written by me, Parvoslav, on the order of the most respected among the notables of the Bulgarian tsardom, the *logothete* Mita. At that time the banners of the Bulgarian throne were held by the most high autocrat of all Bulgarians and Greeks Ioan Alexander, with his tsarina, the newly enlightened and faithful Theodora, and their son Shishman, the young tsar. . . . I beg those more skillful to help me, the one guided by evil, and not utter bad words about the deficiencies and the narrow mind of the above mentioned. . . . to people. . . . and the same. . . . for the memory of that great. . . . Mita in the eternal and God-granted. . . . house. . . . in the future age and for all ages. Amen.

Marginal note from 1365–1369 about the Hungarian conquest of the northwestern Bulgarian fortress Vidin.

206

The Hungarian expansion in northwestern Bulgaria under Louis of Anjou (1342–1382) was ostensibly under the banner of a crusade against the Ottomans. In fact, Louis preferred to encroach on the domains of his much weaker Serbian and Bulgarian neighbors. The occupation of Vidin was accompanied with extensive looting and an attempt to convert the Bulgarian population to Catholicism through the services of the Franciscan order. Five years later, the Hungarians had to withdraw, leaving the debilitated tsardom of Vidin under Ioan Sratsimir, now their vassal, without protection and his polity an easy pray to the intensifying Ottoman pressure. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 172.

This booklet was written by Dragan, a man of many sins and an inarticulate mind, together with his brother Rajko during the days when the Hungarians held Vidin and there was much suffering for the people in that time.

Marginal note in Metropolitan German's Codex, 1359.

207

It is not clear where German was a metropolitan, but the note documents a decisive shift in Ioan Alexander's inheritance strategy, the elevation of Ioan Shishman to the position of "born in purple" that is, heir to the throne. The conferral of this title prompted the "young tsar" Ioan Sratsimir, the last of Alexander's sons from his first marriage to the Vlach princess Theodora, to assume independence in his *apanage* in Vidin. The rift between the brothers split the country in two and with the domain of Dobrotitsa and Ivanka in the northeast and other substantial lordships south of the Hemus further parceling out the land, the Bulgarian tsardom disintegrated. The style of the note illustrates the new style of "putting together wreaths of words," which was becoming the norm in Middle Bulgarian prose. Edition: Dora Ivanova-Mircheva, "Germanov sbornik: balgarski pismen pametnik ot X vek v prepis ot 1359," *Balgarski Ezik*, 4–5 (1965), 314–16.

To the beginning of all beginnings and the divinity without beginning, that is, to the most Holy Trinity glory, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, always, and in the endless centuries, amen. Praise and glory I offer Thee oh Lord Jesus Christ, holy God of ours, for Thee granted it to me, the unworthy, to begin and finish this collection from God in which the authors and insightful masters of the word, having adorned themselves with the grace of the Holy Spirit and the honor of the prophets and the martyrs, communicated Thee undescrivable divinity and Thee incarnation, and the many martyrs' torments, which they accepted in Thee name, and the miracles worked out by the saints through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the gathering of the apostles, and the transfiguration, and the voluntary crucifixion, and the descent into Hell, and the raising from the dead, and the ascension into Heaven. I did all this not at my own instigation but with the labor of the God-fearing servant of the most Holy Trinity and the blessed among the blessed, the high priest among the high priests, the most holy metropolitan German. This codex was written by the hand of someone in the tsardom of the faithful and most high autocract, the Christ-loving and splendid Tsar Ioan Alexander and the "born in purple" Ioan Shishman, under the most holy patriarch of the God-saved city of Tsarigrad Tarnov³²² in the year 6867 [1359], twelfth *indiction*.

- 208 *Bulgarian additions to the chronicle of Constantine Manasses, fourteenth century.* Constantine Manasses was born in the first half of the twelfth century, served as metropolitan of Naupactos, and died in 1187. A gifted poet, he was a prolific author as well and caught the attention of highly placed court patrons. He was asked by Irene, the wife of *sebastocrator* Andronikos, brother of Emperor Manuel I Comnenos (1143–1180) to compose a universal chronicle in verse, and he responded with a work of 6733 verses, which quickly became very popular in Byzantium. Some time before 1344/5 the chronicle was translated into Bulgarian, for in that year it was included in the collection of priest Philip, which contains other works translated for Tsar Ioan Alexander. The translation follows its Byzantine Greek original quite faithfully, but on twenty-seven occasions the translator could not help adding his commentaries to Manasses' text. The additions amount to a short chronicle and testify to the evolution of Bulgarian historical consciousness by the middle of the fourteenth century.

³²² The author uses the traditional Bulgarian name for Constantinople to refer to Tarnov, which was also "City of Tsars," but the identification implied by the name suggests that Bulgarian political ideology was already presenting Tarnov as a "New Constantinople" and "Third Rome," thus appropriating yet another element of the Byzantine imperial ideology. See the Bulgarian additions to Manasses in the next entry.

The full critical edition of the Bulgarian translation of Manasses with variants of its other Slavic receptions and the Bulgarian additions is by Ivan Dujchev et al., eds., *Srednebolgarskij perevod hroniki Konstantina Manasii v slavjanskijh literaturah* (Sofia, 1988), 226–34.

1. [To Noah and the Flood] This Nimrod was the first to advise the gathering of the people. He built Babylon and reigned in it.
2. [To Egypt] Know that Egypt was the first kingdom on earth and the Egyptians were the first to have a mortal man as tsar.
3. [To Sardanapal, King of Assyria] From his time on it became known that the Assyrians, the Haldeans, the Persians, and the Medes will be one tsardom on earth.
4. [To Nebuchadnezzar] From the time of this Nebuchadnezzar the Haldean, the Assyrian, the Median, and the Babylonian tsardoms were all united.
5. [To Cyrus, King of Persia] From that time the Persian kingdom became great on earth.
[To the reign of Darius, King of Persia] Here it is told how the western Hellenes and the Eastern Hellenes began a great internecine war between themselves.
6. [To Ptolemy Lagos] From this Ptolemy to the reign of Cleopatra there were twelve other tsars in Egypt, all of them called Ptolemy.
7. [To Caesar Augustus] In the time of this Caesar Augustus our Lord Jesus Christ took on the flesh and was born.
8. [To Emperor Tiberius] In the time of this Tiberius our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven.
9. [To Emperor Constantine the Great] In the time of the great Tsar Constantine the First Council of the 318 God-bearing Fathers took place.
[To Emperor Theodosius II] Such things happened in Rome. May our new Tsarigrad grow large, strong, and ever younger, may it grow like this to the end, oh tsar who reigns above all [tsars]! It [the city of Tarnov] has such a most bright and light-bearing gift, a great ruler, greatest in bringing victory, stemming from the root of Ioan the most glorious, the Bulgarian Tsar Asen, called Alexander, most humble, full of mercy and patron of the monks, nourisher of the poor, great tsar of the Bulgarians! Let countless suns count his power...

10. [To Emperor Anastasius (491–518)] In the time of Tsar Anastasius the Bulgarians began to conquer this land and came to Bdin. Even before that they had begun to conquer the land of Ohrid and then all this land. From the exodus of the Bulgarians till now there are 870 years.
11. [To Emperor Constantine IV Pogonate (668–685)] The Sixth Holy Council took place under Constantine the Bearded. In the time of this Tsar Constantine the Bulgarians crossed the Danube and took this land from the Greeks after defeating them; they still live in this land. Many years ago this land was called Moesia. They were a great multitude and filled the land on this as well as on the other side of the Danube, all the way to Drach [Durrachium, Durazzo] and even farther away, because Vlahs, and Serbians, etc., are all one.
12. [To Emperor Leo III (717–741)] In the days of this tsar Rome turned to the Franks, because of his blasphemies. In the reign of this Tsar Leo the Coumans³²³ attacked Constantinople and its land; they drowned in the sea, killed by the Greeks, and the Bulgarians cut down whatever was left of them.
13. [To Leo, son of Constantine] In the reign of Leo Kardam was prince of the Bulgarians.
14. [To Emperor Constantine V (741–775)] In the reign of this Tsar Constantine and his mother the Seventh Council against the iconoclasts took place.
15. [To Emperor Nicephoros I (802–811)] This Tsar Nicephoros campaigned on Bulgarian land in the time of Prince Krum and was victorious at first and routed him and captured the treasures that he carried. After that Krum gathered those of his people who were left after the defeat, attacked the tsar at night and not only routed the Greeks, but cut off the head of the tsar himself. He had it covered with silver and, pouring wine into it, gave the Bulgarians to drink from it.
16. [To Emperor Michael Rangabe (811–813)] Prince Krum began a war against this tsar and defeated him by Adrianopolis. The tsar himself barely escaped. The Bulgarians captured the entire property of the Greek tsar.

³²³ The Arabs.

17. [To Emperor Leo the Armenian (813–820)] Tsar Krum fought again with this Tsar Leo in Thrace and at first the Bulgarians were victorious. But as the Bulgarians pursued the Greeks heedlessly, they turned back without any danger and defeated them and even Krum had a close escape for his horse fell from under him.
18. [To Emperor Michael II (820–829)] In the time of this tsar a Greek by the name of Thomas rebelled and after gathering a great army he set out to get the tsardom from Michael and took almost the entire Greek land from him. However, the Bulgarian ruler Omurtag fought with him defeated him and vanquished him, because he had a great love for Michael.
19. [To Emperor Michael III (842–867)] In the time of this Tsar Michael and his mother the Bulgarians were baptized. Since then 511 years have passed. Once, I know not how, the sister of the Bulgarian prince was captured by the Greeks and was taken to the court where she was baptized and was taught to read. In the reign of these tsars there was great peace between Greeks and Bulgarians and she was exchanged for a certain notable [by the name of] Theodor Kufara. When she came back, she did not cease to instruct her brother in the Christian faith until she had him baptized. When he converted, the Bulgarians revolted against him and wanted to kill him because he forsook their faith. However, he fought them, vanquished them, and after that had them converted, some voluntarily, some by force.
20. [To Emperor Basil I (867–886)] In the reign of this Tsar Basil the Russians converted.
21. [To Emperor Leo VI (886–912)] This Tsar Leo called the Hungarians, with treachery, against the tsar of the Bulgarians Simeon because [the latter] defeated his army many times. They defeated him and captured the Bulgarians and he [Simeon] shut himself up in Dristar. Then Simeon fought with the Hungarians a second time, routed them, and looted their land. When he came back from there, he began a new war with the Greeks and routed them.
22. [To Emperor Constantine VII (913–959)] In the reign of this Tsar Constantine the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon entered Constantinople in peace, was blessed by the patriarch, and had lunch with him and the tsar. After he left, he began looting, and then routed the Greeks completely in a battle for a second time.
23. [To Emperor Roman Lakapenos (920–944)] The great-granddaughter of this tsar was the spouse of the Bulgarian Tsar Peter.

- In the reign of this Tsar Roman the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon looted all the way to Constantinople, and set fire even to the imperial court, and captured Adrianopolis, and died in that tsar's reign.
24. [To Emperor Roman II (959–963)] In the reign of this Tsar Roman the Bulgarian Tsar Peter died and his sons Boris and Roman, who were hostages in Constantinople, were set free to go home.
 25. [To Nicephoros Phocas (963–969)] In the reign of this Tsar Nicephoros the Russians looted the Bulgarian land two times in two years for Tsar Nicephoros called the Russians to attack them.
 26. [To Emperor John Tzimiskhes (969–976)] This Tsar Tzimiskhes captured Preslav and stripped Boris [II (970–971)] of all royal insignia and took him to Constantinople. There he made him take off the imperial vestments and made him a *magister*. This is a high dignity with the Greeks. After the fall of Preslav, Svetoslav, the Russian prince, looted the Bulgarian land and put it under his power. When he settled in Drister, Tzimishes set out against him with a large army and defeated him, but let him go free. However, when he reached the land of the Petchenegs, he perished together with all of his [followers].
 27. [To Basil II (976–1025)] This Tsar Basil defeated Samuel, tsar of the Bulgarians, in [several] battles and conquered Bdin, and Pliska, the Great Preslav and the Little [Preslav], and many other towns. Roman, the son of Tsar Peter handed over to him Skopie. Samuel had given it to him to rule over it. For the Bulgarians reigned as far away as Ohrid and Drach and even farther. This Tsar Basil waged many, countless hard-fought wars with the Bulgarians, defeated Tsar Samuel and blinded fifteen thousands Bulgarians, leaving to every hundred [men] a one-eyed one and so he sent them to Samuel. He saw them and died of grief. From the time of this tsar the Bulgarian tsardom was under the power of the Greeks until Asen the First, Tsar of the Bulgarians.

209 *Historical account of the monk Isaiah about the battle of Chernomen, 1371.*
 Isaiah's account is the immediate reaction of a contemporary to the crushing defeat of a Christian coalition of Balkan lords, led by the Serbian Despot Uglesha and his brother King Vukashin against Haji Ilbegi, Evrenos, and other semi-autonomous *udj-beys* or regional commanders of the Ottoman Emir Murad I. The defeat of Chernomen paved the way for an almost unobstructed advance of the Ottomans that was sealed with the battle of Kossovo Polje in 1389, when a second Serbian coalition was routed and its leader, Prince Lazar, captured and beheaded. Isaiah's pessimistic voice betrays the despera-

tion of a witness at the abject conditions of life and the thorough devastation of the region that sapped its people's ability to resist the conquest. Edition: *BSM*, 226–7.

I began the translation of this book of St Dionisius [Areopagite] in times of prosperity, when the churches of God in the Holy Mountain flourished like the Paradise and a well-watered garden but I completed it in the most dreadful and terrible of times. In that time God poured His wrath upon the Christians of the western provinces;³²⁴ in that time Despot Uglesha gathered all Serbian and Greek armies, together with his brother King Vukashin and other magnates, about sixty thousand chosen troops in all, and led them into Macedonia³²⁵ to chase away the Turks without thinking that no one can oppose the wrath of God. Not only did they fail to repulse the Turks, but suffered an awful fate themselves. They were slain and their bones remained unburied. A great multitude of others died under the blade of the sword or were carried away as captives. Only a small number managed to escape and come back. Never before has the ear heard or the eye seen the like of the sufferings and the afflictions that befell on the western cities and provinces.

After they killed Despot Uglesha, the Turks spread around and flew over the entire earth like the birds of the air. Some Christians were slaughtered, others dragged in captivity, and those who remained were mowed down by unfortunate death, for they died of hunger. In that time such a famine set in, which had not been seen since the creation of the world and, Merciful Christ, let not ever again occur. If anyone escaped this affliction they were by God's will eaten by wolves. Day and night did they attack and tear apart the people. Alas! What a sorrowful spectacle to behold! The land was deserted, deprived of all goods, people died out, beasts and fruit disappeared. There was no prince, nor a leader, nor a guide left among the people; there was no one to deliver and save them. Fear of the Turks seized everyone and the once heroic hearts of honorable men now turned into weak women's hearts. In that time, I believe the seventh royal dynasty of the Serbian people ended. Indeed, in that time the quick envied the dead who died earlier. Believe me, not only I, who am unskilled in everything, but even the once artful among the Hellenes Livianus would not have been able to

³²⁴ The Balkans.

³²⁵ Byzantine Thrace.

describe the afflictions that befell the Christian world of the western provinces.

If you wish to find out the name of this unworthy monk, its beginning is an “eight,” the middle “two hundred and one,” and the end “eleven” [ISAIA]. The year then was 6879 [1371], ninth *indiction*.

210 *Ioan Shishman missives to his officials, most likely 1393–1395.*

These highly intriguing notes are preserved in MS Bulgarian # 298, Bucharest, Rumanian Academy of Sciences, late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries. The scribe must have copied from a formulary belonging to Shishman’s chancery and dating from his sojourn in the fortress of Nicopol in the years 1393–1395. The letters, if the notes convey their text correctly, give Shishman’s title as “Lord” [*gospodin*] instead of the traditional “tsar:” a feature reflecting the ruler’s diminished status as Ottoman vassal. On the other hand, he is still referred to as lord of Tarnov. On the title alone it is thus possible to date the missives in 1393, before the fall of Tarnov. The urgency of the tone betrays the desperation of Shishman in his hour of need. Edition: K. Ivanova, “Un renseignement nouveau dans un manuscrit bulgare du XIV^e siècle au sujet de la résistance du tsar Ioan Sisman contre les Ottomans près de Nikopol,” *Études Balkaniques*, 1 (1988), 91.

[From Shishman] Lord of Tarnov, to you, Baul. Gather as soon as possible as many soldiers as there are and come with them to Nicopol on the orders of my lordship.

Orders of the Lord of Tarnov: to you Aldemir. As many solders as there are, as soon as possible. . . .

Orders of the Lord of Tarnov: to you, Aldemir. As many soldiers as there are should come as soon as possible with their weapons. . . .

. . .all who are . . .in Christ . . .his *bolijars* . . .on the orders of my lordship . . .

211 *Bulgarian Anonymous Chronicle, fifteenth century.*

This chronicle is the only extant example of native Bulgarian annalistic from the late medieval period. It is composed in the manner of the short Byzantine chronicles and traces the Ottoman conquest of the country. Most of the early dates are erroneous but the anonymous chronicler’s focus on the causes and circumstances of the Ottoman conquest make it an exquisite record, with hindsight, of the Bulgarian position on these traumatic events. Editions: Jon Bogdan, “Ein Beitrag zur bulgarischen und serbischen Geschichtsschreibung,” *Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, 13 (1891), 526–36; Ivan Tjutjundzhiev, *Balgarskata anonimna chronika ot XV vek* (Veliko Tarnovo, 1992).

In 6904 [1296] a certain Othman, hailing from the kin of Ishmael, arose from the eastern parts, from the mountain called Ephtra.³²⁶ He attacked the Karmians as well as the dwellers of Harsan,³²⁷ and constantly fought with them and waged war on them, vanquishing them. Also, he gradually came to the land of Aydin,³²⁸ and to Philadelphia and Malaina.³²⁹ Looting and conquering these lands, Othman lived thirty years and died.³³⁰

His son Orhan inherited from him.³³¹ He began an even greater endeavor, waging wars and conquering, until he reached to the Greek provinces in the vicinity of the city of Brusa. He laid siege to the city with his troops, burned its environs, and conquered it with his son Amorat the Great,³³² and settled there and made it his capital city. Not many days later Orhan died too in 6870 [1362]. Amorat remained, who was young and impetuous, and strove strongly against the Bulgarians. He wanted the Greeks to let him cross over,³³³ but was prevented from doing so by the many ships and galleys which Kantakuzenos³³⁴ maintained and supported well, so that they guarded the crossing at Gallipoli. Amorat, as we said, was forced to cross the sea.

When Kantakuzenos saw that he was not able to maintain the sailors and the fighting men on the galleys because he was short of bread and pork meat and the treasury was emptied daily and there were not enough *ducats* and silver, he deliberated upon this, and sent messengers to Tarnov, to the Bulgarian Tsar Alexander,³³⁵ to help him provision the marines so that they guard the crossing. The Bulgarians, however, when they heard this, mocked and cursed the Greeks, and not only insulted them, but used a bad language of their wives and mothers, and sent them back empty-handed. Kantakuzenos was much saddened and sent messengers to the lords of the Serbians, Urosh, Despot Uglesha, and

³²⁶ Osman (c. 1281–c. 1326) with the title of “bey,” inherited the leadership from his father Ertogrul (1227–1281).

³²⁷ Seldjuk principalities in eastern Anatolia.

³²⁸ The Turkish principality of Aydin with capital in Smirna, modern Izmir.

³²⁹ Then still Byzantine-held cities.

³³⁰ Actually ruling thirty years; the author frequently confuses years of rule with years of life.

³³¹ Orhan (1326–c. 1359/1360).

³³² Murad I (1360/1362–1389), the first Ottoman ruler to adopt the title “sultan.”

³³³ From Anatolia to Europe, at Gallipoli.

³³⁴ John VI Kantakuzenos, Byzantine emperor 1347–1354, died in 1383.

³³⁵ Ioan Alexander (1331–1371).

King Vukashin,³³⁶ to help maintain the marines. But these, when they heard about it, laughed at the Greeks and swore at them; not only did they insult them, but used a bad language of their wives and mothers, and sent them back empty-handed. When Kantakuzenos heard this, he was much aggrieved and at a loss about what to do. Then Kantakuzenos sent to the Bulgarian tsars and the Serbian lords and told them: “You did not want to help us, but you will be sorry later.” They did not pay the least bit attention to these words, but replied: “When the Turks come against us, we will defend ourselves.” Then Kantakuzenos made an agreement with Amorat, and they swore mutual oaths and gave one another letters, which are preserved to this day, [guaranteeing that] the Turks will never do any harm to the Greeks either in Romania or in Macedonia.³³⁷ The Turks promised to keep to this agreement and then Kantakuzenos allowed the Turks to cross over at Gallipoli.

And so Amorat, the son of Orhan, crossed over with the Turks in the year 6834 [1326] and set off against Sredets. The Bulgarians gathered an army under their leader Asen, the son of Alexander, and a great battle was fought. Then they killed Asen and a great multitude of Bulgarians perished.³³⁸ Again did the Bulgarians come together, under the leadership of Michael, the son of Alexander, but he too was killed, and many people were captured and carried away across Gallipoli.³³⁹

Kantakuzenos, after ruling twenty five years, died. Kaloyan came of age and took over the tsardom of his father in the year 6845 [1337].³⁴⁰ Kaloyan had two sons, Andronikos and Tsar Manuel.³⁴¹ Andronikos made an agreement with Tchelebi the Great, the son of Amorat, to kill his father Amorat, and Andronikos, to kill his father Kaloyan.³⁴² Both Tsar Kaloyan and Amurat found out about this. Amorat seized

³³⁶ King Stephen V Urosh (1355–1371), and the members of the Mrnjavchevic dynasty King Vukashin (1366–1371), co-ruler with his domain in modern Macedonia, and Despot Ioan Uglesha (before 1365–1371), ruler of Serres.

³³⁷ During the Byzantine civil war of 1341–1347.

³³⁸ Most likely in 1348; Asen was Ioan Asen IV, “young tsar” and co-ruler, see # 168.

³³⁹ In 1352, the Bulgarian forces were led by Michael Asen, “young tsar” and co-ruler. The Ottomans had gained control of the fortress of Tsimpe in 1352 and Gallipoli in 1354 and freely crossed over to the Balkans.

³⁴⁰ Emperor John V Palaeologos (1341–1391, under Kantakuzenos’ tutelage during 1347–1354).

³⁴¹ John V had four sons, Andronikos IV, Manuel II, Theodore, and Michael.

³⁴² Andronikos IV and Savji (not Yakub Tchelebi who died in 1389) revolted against their fathers in 1373.

Tchelebi and put out his eyes, and Tsar Kaloyan seized his son Andronikos and put his eyes out.³⁴³ And the two ruled together, Amorat and Tsar Kaloyan, and there was peace between them and a great love.

Amorat rose again, to go against the Bulgarians or against Uglesha. When Uglesha and King Vukashin found out, [they] gathered a great number of troops from Serbia and from Dalmatia and Trebine as well, for Uglesha and his brother King Vukashin came down all the way to Serres. Then a great multitude of Turks came with Amorat. A great battle was fought and a great bloodshed happened at the river Maritsa. The Turks called out and as the Serbians took to flight, they killed Uglesha and King Vukashin by the river Maritsa. These two perished in 6879 [1371], on the twenty-sixth day of September. The Turks captured a great number [of people] and led them across Gallipoli.³⁴⁴

Before that battle died the tsar of Tarnov, Alexander, in 6870 [1362], on the seventeenth day of February.³⁴⁵ Tsar Shishman, the son of Alexander, sat on the throne. Amorat sent to him to give him his sister for a spouse and even though he did not want it, he sent his sister, the tsarina Lady Tamar.³⁴⁶

In this time Kaloyan Palaeologos reigned in Tsarigrad. The Turks broke the oaths they had given to the Greeks and took over the city of Gallipoli³⁴⁷ and the villages around it, seized Macedonia³⁴⁸ and began to wage war as they pleased. They put guards in galleys at the crossing, and they chased away the Greeks and sent them to their homes.

Tsar Kaloyan ruled for thirty-five years and died in 6880 [1372].³⁴⁹ His son Manuel [II] Paleologos sat on the throne. Then a great multitude of Turks came together, invaded, and began to loot and conquer lands and cities. They conquered Amorea all the way to Babylonia and after turning back, seized Drach even to Dalmatia. They took over the entire territory of Albania because the Christian countries were feeble and there was no one to oppose them.

³⁴³ Andronikos IV was not completely blinded.

³⁴⁴ The battle of Chernomen on 26 September 1371; see # 209.

³⁴⁵ Ioan Alexander died on 17 February 1371.

³⁴⁶ Kera Tamar is remembered in the Synodikon for “having liberated her people” through the political marriage to Murad I.

³⁴⁷ Galipolli had been seized by the crusade of the Green Count of Savoy, Amedeo VI, in 1365 and he returned it to Byzantium. The Ottomans took it back in the early 1370s.

³⁴⁸ Byzantine and Bulgarian Thrace.

³⁴⁹ John V Palaeologos died in 1391 and was succeeded by Manuel II Palaeologos (1391–1425).

Some years after that they took on the Serbian land and there a battle was fought, in which they slew an enormous and innumerable amount of troops and there was such a bloodshed that the writing of the Scripture was fulfilled: “God, tribes came in your domain and defiled Thee holy church, turning Jerusalem into a storage for fruit, gave the corpses of Thee servants as food to the birds of the sky, and the bodies of Thee saints to the earthly beasts.” Then, therefore, one of the warriors, by the name of Milosh, being very brave, just like once St Demetrius attacked Tsar Skiloioan [Kaloyan]³⁵⁰ who came against Thessaloniki and pierced him with the spear, so he pierced the iniquitous Amorat and gorged out his intestines and his most heinous soul with his spear. The Turks killed the Serbian Prince Lazar in 6897 [1389], in the month of June. Bayazid took over the tsardom of his father Amorat, subjected the Serbian land to his power, forced them to pay him tribute, give him troops and go to war with him, and put Despot Stephen on his father’s throne over the Serbians.³⁵¹

Not many days after that a very great multitude of Turks gathered and set out against Mircho Voevoda and his Vlachs. A great battle was fought and many picked [warriors] fell from among the strongest of the Turks and the Christian rulers. Among them were Constantine Dragash and King Marko. Innumerable spears were broken and the air could not be seen because of the many arrows. Such a river of blood ran from the massive amount of human corpses that Bayazid himself got scared and took to flight. However, as Mircho fled to the Magyar land, he [Bayazid] put one of his powerful men to rule over this country.³⁵² Bayazid himself fled, and wanted to cross the Danube. He put guards alongside the entire crossing of the river Danube. He seized the Bulgarian Tsar Shishman and slew him in 6903 [1395], on the third day of the month of June, conquered the Bulgarian land as well and put governors over the entire Bulgarian land.³⁵³

Not many years after that, in the year 6905 [1396–1397] the Magyar King Sigismund arose and gathered all Western troops, that is, kings, princes, lords, pans, cardinals, powerful and free people, to cut it

³⁵⁰ “John the dog,” a denigrating soubriquet given to Kaloyan by the Byzantines.

³⁵¹ Reference to the battle at Kossovo Pole on 15 June 1389 and Stephen Lazarevic’s vassalage, see # 151.

³⁵² The battle at Rovine on 17 May 1395; for King Marko and Constantine Dragash see # 151.

³⁵³ The date of Shishman’s arrest and execution appears accurate and is confirmed by Ottoman evidence.

short, an overwhelming multitude of lords, some [traveling] overland, others on the Danube on a great number of ships and boats so that even the water could be seen on account of the great many ships. The king took openly, as we said, the overland route, covered splendidly in much gold and pearls, weapons, and iron armor. Advancing, he came down to the Lower Land round about the Danube. When he arrived on Bulgarian soil across the city of Nicopol, thirty galleys from Venice and Constantinople put in under the city and expected to take over Nicopolis. The iniquitous Bayazid, for his part, gathered a good many of his Ishmaelites and as many troops as there were in the Eastern parts. He was eager to clash with the Western troops as soon as possible. When they came close, the Turks did not hesitate, but gave battle right away. A great battle began, [there was] bloodshed and slaying of many commanders and warriors, and the air of the sky was darkened by the many arrows and spears as if by straw raised by the wind. The earth echoed as if from a great noise because of the [clashing of] many shields and the fall of people and horses. When the king saw that things were not turning out well, he quickly got on board one of the galleys and left together with the other galleys in shame. Bayazid, having gained the victory, followed with his Ishmaelites and pursued them all the way to the Danube. A new slaughter occurred on the water; men and horses drowned in the Danube just like the Pharaoh who was pursuing Israel in the Red Sea. The king came with great arrogance and self-confidence, and went back with great shame and dishonor, having lost a great many people and leaving behind so many bones that one could not go through.³⁵⁴

Bayazid did not waste time, but set off from there and turned westwards, conquering tsardoms and lands. He captured and subjugated Tsar Sratsimir in the year 6906 [1397–1398].³⁵⁵ [Then] he invaded the Magyar land, burning and reducing it to ashes; just like the blaze burns down the forest, so did he loot the land all the way to the very city of Buda. He came back from there with a great victory, as in ancient times Nebuchadnezzar came back from Israel to Babylon, driving before himself a barefooted and shackled multitude, so that the Scripture was fulfilled: “I turned to suffering when a thorn pricked me.”

³⁵⁴ The battle of Nicopolis took place on 25 September 1396.

³⁵⁵ The date appears accurate for Sratsimir was not seized immediately after September 1396, as can be inferred from #147 and #153.

On his way back from that great victory Bayazid arrived in Macedonia, went through Adrianopolis and Neapolis, and from there planned to go against the City of Constantine. Leaving Gallipoli to his right, he set out and went through the Greek land. The Greeks came out and diligently bowed to him and he did not harm them, being in a haste to reach the holy City. He arrived with a great number of troops and laid siege to the city walls and the entire city shook and trembled in fear of the Ishmaelites.³⁵⁶ Even Tsar Manuel and his *synclit* were afraid. Bayazid sent to the tsar to let him enter the City. Not knowing what to do and being at a loss, [the Byzantines] only said: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, help,” threw their arms to the sky and offered prayers to the Mother of God, as they usually do when in dire straights. The patriarch Lord Anthony³⁵⁷ ordered the entire ecclesiastical order to take up the honorable cross and the icon of the most pure Lady of ours, the Mother of God, and the image of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ and circumnavigate the city walls, fasting and praying. He also ordered that the *akatist* [hymn] be sang, accompanied by prayers such as “Lord have mercy; in our desperation we offer You this prayer.” The tsar sat in council with the *synclit* and ordered many presents to be sent so that peace was concluded, and begged him to accept tribute as well. They sent many presents but he turned them down and insisted on entering the City. They saw his untamable brutality, for it was possible to tame a beast but not him, because he raved like a lion and said: “Tomorrow I will take your city and will let you go wherever you like.” The poor Greeks, having heard that, sighed from the bottom of their hearts to God and calling out strongly, said: “Lord God, gather Your power and visit Your vineyard planted by Thee right hand, do to them as Thou did to Jabin and Sisera by the stream of Kishon,³⁵⁸ who said “We will inherit the light of God.”

The Turks, however, did not pay attention, and moved their entire multitude closer to the city walls, sending so many arrows in the air that neither the rays of the sun nor the air could be seen on account of so many arrows, [flying] like straw in the wind. Their many shouts broke through the air like the clap of thunder. The threats did not do much, but they shot with slings and other weapons, crossbows and *lombards*

³⁵⁶ In 1394.

³⁵⁷ Anthony IV (1389–1390 and 1391–1397).

³⁵⁸ Psalms 83:9.

gaining speed with their horses from afar and halting at the Galata, where they shouted laud with terrifying voices and cast frightening glances. Bayazid took position upon higher ground and, sighting “St Sophia,” told his notables: “There I will make a dwelling for myself and my wives!” The notables divvyed up the holy churches between themselves, planning to make them their dwellings. They even brought barrels³⁵⁹ to destroy the City.

At first they began to strike Galata and wreaked havoc, demolishing the crenels and sometimes even breaking through parts of the wall. But when the day ended and darkness fell, the Frankish masons set out to work throughout the night and on the morrow [the walls] were whole and new and the Ishmaelites marveled. However, the Franks did not sit idle and fought back; they shot with their crossbows and *lombards* and guns, and made fire with much smoke and repulsed them far away. Once the Ishmaelites attacked and quickly reached under the walls of the city³⁶⁰ so that the Franks got scared and wanted to flee to the holy City, but the Greeks came to their rescue. In this way, therefore, they helped one another like friends, as if a mother embraced her young one; so the Greeks came and helped the citizens of Galata so that the Scripture was fulfilled: “The mother is rejoicing for her children.”

When they heard of this the citizens of Trapezund, Cafa, and Amastro, and all their islands arrived in their galleys with weapons and crossbows, carrying sufficient provisions as well. Everyone from Venice and Mitilene flocked to the holy City, arrived there sailing with their provisions and support, entered the City, climbed upon the towers of the city walls, shot with their crossbows and weapons, resisted as much as they could, and threw them [the attackers] back far from the walls. Often, some of the Greeks secretly gathered troops, sallied out, and slew many of them. And so it went on for almost seven years. When the wicked Bayazid saw that he will not be able to accomplish anything he was overcome with anger and, gathering all of his military forces, left. Wishing to avoid shame, he put his hand on his mouth and said these words only, as in the past Julian boasted to St Basil the Great of Ceasaria, setting off against the Persians: “Next year I will take the city.” In the same way this one left, uttering the same words.

³⁵⁹ Cannons.

³⁶⁰ The Genoese quarter of Pera.

Not many days after that God handed him as fodder to the Ethiopian people.³⁶¹ For from the sunny East the sons of Hagar rallied with their armies. The infidel was killed by them and the memory of his perished with great noise in the year 6910 [1402] on July 28. His son Tchelebi Musulman became tsar.³⁶²

The Greeks again began their song of thankfulness, saying: "Great is God and much praised, great is His power, for His grace is not sent out in the guise of a multitude of men. God helps those who fear him and trust in His mercy." By the grace of God the holy City is protected even to this day from foreign enemies.

In the year 6917 [1409], while Tchelebi Musulman was still alive, the pious Tsar Kaloyan, the grandson of Lord Tsar Manuel passed away. In the same year Musa³⁶³ came out in the provinces round about the Danube and gathered a great multitude of Vlachs, Serbians, and Bulgarians. With him was the Serbian Despot Stephen. They went against Constantinople and fought a great battle with Tchelebi outside the city, at Kosmidia. They killed Tchelebi Musulman and the memory of him perished with great noise. Musa Beg died in the year 6922 [1414] and Sultan Krishchi became tsar in the year 6925 [1417].³⁶⁴

212 *Annals of the monastery of St James in Osogovo, (Sarandapor), late fifteenth century.*

Edition: *BSM*, 150.

In the year 6971 [1463] Tsar Mehmet³⁶⁵ conquered all of Bosnia and came to the monastery of Sarandapor on Kriva Reka, and captured the king of the Bosnians and had his throat slashed.³⁶⁶ In the same year died [Despot] Thomas Kantakuzenos, on June 25.³⁶⁷

³⁶¹ The Mongols of Timurlenk crushed Bayazid at the battle of Ankara on 28 July 1402.

³⁶² Suleiman Tchelebi, Bayazid's son. He remained in control of the European domains of the Ottomans until 1410 when he was killed in the fratricidal war that followed the capture of Bayazid in 1402.

³⁶³ Musa, one of Bayazid's younger sons, was initially Mehmed I's ally but in 1410 proclaimed himself a sultan.

³⁶⁴ The correct date is 1413; Mehmed I Tchelebi (1413–1421) became the sole ruler after the death of Musa.

³⁶⁵ Mehmed II the Conqueror (1451–1481).

³⁶⁶ Stephen Tomashevich (1461–1463) was captured and executed at Jajce.

³⁶⁷ Thomas Kantakuzenos (d. July 25, 1463 in Adrianople) was a long-time official of Djuradj Brankovic.

In the year 6996 [1487] the Arabs and the Egyptians routed the army of Tsar Bayazid on their own soil.³⁶⁸ In this year died the pious Tsarina Mara, the daughter of Despot George [Brankovic] in Ezhevo, in the month of September, on Friday, the tenth day. In the same year died the abbot of Sarandapor, Arsenius.

In the year 6999 [1491] Tsar Bayazid [II] moved his army to Macedonia and stayed three months in the town of Filibe³⁶⁹ and then dismissed the army and returned to Constantinople.

In the year 7000 [1492] Tsar Bayazid came out again with his army and spent five weeks at the city of Sardakia called Sofia and then moved against the Arbanasians, called Kruleshi.³⁷⁰

Annals, a nineteenth-century compilation based on fifteenth-century Serbian and other Balkan short chronicles. 213

This compilation follows the style of the short Byzantine chronicles but contains many inaccuracies in its early part. It is more valuable as a monument of the tenacity of the Bulgarian historical consciousness, and the importance of Bulgarian history in late- and post-medieval Balkan historiography than as historical records of past events. It has been argued that the *Annals* were compiled by the editor from snippets of Bulgarian-related material in Serbian annalistic works. Edition: Stojan Zahariev, *Gaida*, 13 (1866), 206.

In the year 6867 [1359] the Turks came to Gallipoli.³⁷¹

In the year 6869 [1361] Tsar Osman killed the hero Momchil and took Gallipoli and Ksanti. In this year Osman killed King Vukashin on the river Maritsa and Despot Uglesha, his brother, in Macedonia on September 26. In this year the leadership of the Serbians and the town of Prilep were taken by Prince Lazar Pribaichev, Macedonian by birth.

In the year 6894 [1386] Tsar Murat took Plovdiv and other cities and despoiled the Bulgarian land.

In the year 6901 [1393] Tsar Bayazid took Great Tarnovo on July 17.

³⁶⁸ The Mamluks of Egypt routed Bayazid II's forces in 1487 during Mamluk operations in the region of Taurus, in the course of the long war of 1485–1491.

³⁶⁹ Plovdiv.

³⁷⁰ One of Bayazid II's expeditions in Albania; the country was overrun and subjugated in 1497.

³⁷¹ Most of the personages and events listed have already been identified in previous entries.

In the year 6903 [1395] Tsar Bayazid routed Mircho the Voevoda of Vlahia at Rovine and Marko Kralevic perished there as well as Constantine and Dragash Comneni.

In the year 6904 [1396] Tsar Bayazid routed King Sigismund at Nicopol; three years later Ravanica burned down. In this year Tsar Bayazid took Bdin from the Bulgarian king Lord George Strashimirov, as well as the city of Nicopol.

In the year 69..7 [?] Mircho Voevoda of Vlahia died and the next year Tsar Suleiman despoiled Vlahia.

In the year 6941 [1439] Tsar Murat took Thessaloniki and other towns.

In the year 6992 [1484] Tsar Bayazid went to Karabogdania³⁷² and took Kilia and Beli Grad from the Vlahian Voevoda Stephen Bogdanov.³⁷³

In the year 7017 [1509] died Radul, Voevoda of Vlahia.³⁷⁴

In the year 7021 [1513] Mehmed Beg killed Vlade, Voevoda of Vlahia.³⁷⁵

In the year 7001 [1493] Tsar Bayazid killed Ban Michael Shishman and put a Turkish garrison in Sofia.

In the year 7869 [2361?] Tsar Murad took over and subjugated Prince Lazar, to give him annual tribute and twelve thousand Serbian troops.

214 *Historical account of the Bulgarian and Serbian Patriarchs, sixteenth century.*

The account, most likely a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century product, draws on the oral tradition of the medieval centuries and reflects the popular perception of the Greek clergy as deceitful and exploitative, the pride in the independent Bulgarian Orthodox church, and the southwestern Bulgarian territories' strong sense of belonging to the Bulgarian church, state, and nation. Edition: Bonju Angelov, "Stari slavjanski textove," *Izvestija na instituta za balgarska literatura*, 6 (1958), 266–7.

The Bulgarians, even though they were not under the power of the Greek tsardom, wished that a metropolitan was sent to them from there, for there was the receptacle of piety. They did not know piety at first,

³⁷² Moldova.

³⁷³ Stephen the Great (1457–1504) was son of Bogdan II (1449–1451).

³⁷⁴ Radu the Great (1495–1508).

³⁷⁵ Vladu of the Craioveshti family, a conteder for the title, was killed in 1512 and replaced by Neagoe Besarab (1512–1521) by the Ottomans who acted as arbiters in the Vlachian power contests.

and lived like this for a long time. The Greeks, who are very sly, hid the truth. Then they decided to sell out piety, and sent to the Bulgarians metropolitans from the city of Constantine. However, these did not instruct them in the apostolic manner, but collected [the people's] wealth and one after another went back to the city of Constantine.

When the Bulgarian tsar saw that they had deceived him he decided, like the true tsar he was, to install his bishops in the city of Tarnov who would be no less pious but would steer clear of the shameless custom of the greedy characters. And so piety shone bright. Peace and good order reigned everywhere in the Bulgarian land. And from among the many metropolitans a patriarch was selected for Tarnov. In the city of Tarnov many patriarchs shone like the sun. Among them are our holy father Theophylactus, narrator of the Gospels; Ioan and Euthymius; and many others whose honorable relics are to this very day whole and indestructible in the city of Tarnov itself and spread healing everywhere. If it did not please God that the Bulgarians had their own church head, He would not have willed to make none of these famous. To this [Bulgarian] tsardom belonged the land of Ohrid and other far away places, [now] divided by the Turks. And there, with the blessing of the patriarch of Tarnov, the archbishop of Ohrid installs his bishops. And so it remains even to the present day.

Royal Ideology

Panegyric to Tsar Ioan Alexander in a Pesnivets, a collection of psalms prepared for him in 1337, with marginal notes.

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Edition: Hristo Kodov, *Opis na slavjanskite rakopisi v bibliotekata na Balgarskata Akademija na Naukite* (Sofia, 1969), 13–16.

God opposes the proud and grants His grace to the humble.

Pandazi *logothete*.

Ioan Alexander, tsar of the Bulgarians. + That is, this was made for the assistance and strengthening of Ioan Alexander, tsar of the Bulgarians and even more so of the Greeks. So be it forever, amen!

God have mercy on Simon.

To the beginning of all beginnings and the divinity without beginning, that is, the most Holy Trinity: Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that helps in the beginning and the speedy completion of

useful things, and without it neither deed nor word are completed, because with His grace and assistance this small work called *Pesnivets* was began, with the full *ustav* and the answers in the year 6845 [1337], tenth *indiction*, on the request of the most high Tsar Ioan Alexander, God-chosen and God-crowned.

For this reason, as we gather, let us praise God and send out this true song to Christ, Tsar and Crown-giver and bestower, the Almighty of everyone, the One who has given us a great commander and a tsar of tsars, the great Ioan Alexander, the most Orthodox of all, elder and military leader and strong in battle, courteous and welcoming, with a godly sight and red cheeks, handsome, walking straight with bent knees, his eyes gazing sweetly at everyone, unspoken righteous judge [gaurding] orphans and widows. Who among us, therefore, after he has seen the tsar, will go back to his house saddened? In his military might he appears to me like another ancient Alexander, for just in the same way this one captured many cities with mightily and manly at the beginning [of his rule]. Such appeared among us the great Ioan Alexander, who reigns over all Bulgarians, who distinguished himself in great and hard-fought battles, and powerfully put down the Greek tsar and, as the latter wandered about, captured him in his hands and took the fortified cities, Nesebar and the entire Pomorie with Romania, as well as Bdin and the Podunavie, all the way to [the river] Morava. Other cities and places, provinces and villages ran to throw themselves at the feet of the tsar. After he had all his enemies in his hands, he cast them down under his feet and established a lasting peace in the universe.

It seems to me that this tsar appeared like a new Constantine among the tsars on account of his faith and piety, his heart and his demeanor, for he carries with himself the victory-bearing cross as a scepter. Displaying and announcing this banner, he drove away and dispersed all resisting and proud powers. This tsar of the Bulgarians, trusting the victorious piece of wood, [compares to] what we know about the sons of Israel and the way they waged war on their enemies, for he gained mighty victories over all powers and chased them away with the assistance of the cross. None of the first tsars seems to me to be like this great Tsar Ioan Alexander, the praise and glory of the Bulgarians.

Look up now, big and small, and unfold the battle banners of the victorious Bulgarian tsar. Come closer, patriarchs and holy men, monks and hermits, judges and *bolijars*, and the entire ecclesiastical estate, simple slaves and free persons, magnates and the entire army, and rejoice with joy beyond any words and glorify the great Tsar and God Christ, the

Crown-giver, and send out to him songs of victory. Holy Trinity, protect the Bulgarian tsar, guard him and strengthen him, give him victory over his adversaries and cast down completely his enemies and grant him long years, oh God of all! And I myself, weaving together his joyful praises, utter this: “Rejoice, Bulgarian tsar, rejoice, oh tsar of tsars! Rejoice, chosen one of God! Rejoice, oh merciful one! Rejoice, crowned by God! Rejoice, oh high one! Rejoice, guarded by God! Rejoice, commander in war! Rejoice, defender of the faithful! Rejoice, glory and praise of Bulgaria! Rejoice, Tsar Alexander! Rejoice, Ioan! Rejoice with your pious spouse, Tsarina Theodora! Rejoice with the sweet children of yours, Tsar Michael Asen, Sratsimir, and Asen! Rejoice, city of Tarnov! Rejoice, cities and provinces! Rejoice and rejoice together again, for you have such a tsar! May God strengthen them in their power and give them the Kingdom of Heaven and settle them in His palace and residence in the endless centuries and always and now and for ever and for all ages, Amen!

Great Tsar Alexander: do not forget the one who wrote down this book for your assistance and praise and for the intercession for your tsardom for all [ages].

...

In the year 6965 [1457], the twenty-first solar cycle and the eleventh lunar cycle, the servant of God, the pious and Christ-loving lord of the Serbians, Despot Lord George [Brankovich] presented himself to his Master, the Lord God. Glory to Him for all ages, Amen!

Panegyric-postscript to the London Gospel of Tsar Ioan Alexander, 1356.

Editions: Petar Gudev, “Balgarski rakopisi v bibliotekata na lord Zouche,” *Žbornik za narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i kniznina*, vol. 7 (1892), 164–5; Ekaterina Dimitrova, *The Gospels of Tsar Ioan Alexander* (London: British Library, 1994).

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The faithful, Christ-loving, most high, and God-crowned autocrat Tsar Ioan Alexander found it³⁷⁶ like a lamp left behind in a dark corner and neglected by the ancient tsars. This Christ-loving Tsar Ioan Alexander discovered it with divine striving and announced it, [that is, its] Greek words were translated into our Slavic speech and displayed for all to see. It was bound on the outer side with gilded planks. Inside it was artfully painted by artists with the life-giving images of the Lord and

³⁷⁶ The Gospel.

his glorious disciples made with bright colors and gold for the strengthening of his tsardom. Just like the great among the saints Constantine together with his mother Elena pulled out of the loins of the earth the Lord's life-giving cross, so did he with this fourfold messenger of the good news. At that time he held the scepter of the Bulgarian and the Greek tsardom together with his faithful, God-crowned, and newly enlightened tsarina, Lady Theodora [III], having the same name as the Lord's gift, and with his natural and most beloved son Tsar Ioan Shishman. For the glory of the Creator of everything and His good news messengers, Matthew, Mark, Luca, and John, through whose prayers may God grant him to be victorious over the enemies who wage war against him and to crush their heads under his feet. Amen. In the year 6864 [1356], ninth *indiction*. The name of the one who wrote this book is Simeon, servant of my Lord the Tsar.

- 217 *Legends to royal images in the Bulgarian translation of the Chronicle of Constantine Manassis, later part of the fourteenth century.*
Edition: Ivan Dujchev, *Letopista na Konstantin Manasi* (Sofia, 1969).

Ioan Alexander in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians and Greeks

+ The souls of the righteous are from now on in the hands of the Lord.

The gates and powers of Heaven opened to admit the soul of Tsar Ivan Asen [IV], son of the great Tsar Ivan Alexander, carried by an angel.

Tsar Ioan Alexander, Tsar Michael, Tsar Ioan Sratsimir, Tsar Ioan Asen [V].

- 218 *Scribal note in the gospel of the metropolitan bishop of Vidin Daniel, 1348.*
The note documents the rise of Vidin, now an apanage of the 'young tsar'—i.e., the heir-apparent—Ioan Sratsimir, as a center of literary production. Metropolitan Daniel is not mentioned in the *Synodikon* of the Bulgarian church and does appear in any other source. Sratsimir's title, which is the only indication of the date of the gospel, indicates that the young prince was still in line to take over the throne in Tarnov. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 170.

Glory to the good beginning that precedes the ages, the Word without beginning, and the Holy Spirit, that is, to the divinity of the Holy Trinity, which is indivisible and has no beginning and will be for all ages.

By the will and with the assistance of the Holy Trinity this holy and divine endeavor was began, that is, the book called in Greek “The Four Gospels,” with great effort and attention by me, the wretched one, in the time when the great and pious Tsar Ioan Alexander wore the crown on his head and held the scepter in his hand together with his son, the “young tsar” Ioan Sratsimir, and the church was under the guidance of its pillar, the patriarch Lord Theodosius. This holy undertaking was accomplished in the great and populous city of Bdin on the order and at the instigation of the great and most holy metropolitan Lord Daniel. And I, being unworthy and clumsy, feared to begin that deed in Christ for it was above my head. However, as I was a relative of this holy metropolitan and, above all, I am used to humility, I did not want to disobey. For that reason I beg you, who read and copy, do not utter bad words but bless, so that you too may receive blessings from the One who fulfills the prayers of those who worship, and blesses the years of the righteous.

Scribal note to a translation of Paul’s Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles, ca. 1348. 219

Edition: *SBK*, 2, 173–4.

Because by God’s will the faithful and Christ-loving Ioan Alexander was anointed to the tsardom of the Bulgarian throne, with God’s help he conquered and subdued many lands of other tsars and was adorned with all sorts of virtues. Among the many good deeds of his, he desired with all diligence and spiritual love, as a good God-lover, this as well: namely, to have this book, that is, the *Acts of the Apostles*, the conciliar epistles and these of the great Paul translated from the Greek language into the Bulgarian. It so happened at the time that I was around, the wretched and unworthy of such an enterprise, and was compelled to do it by this pious and faithful tsar and did not dare disobey his God-pleasing command. With much effort and diligence and with even more arduous labor I did as much as I could and translated this God-inspired book from the Greek language into Bulgarian. I made three books: the *Epistles of Paul*, the *Acts*, and a third one... [lacuna]. Here are collected... [lacuna] the apostolic and conciliar epistles. I beg those who read and copy this book to complete what in my ignorance I have left unfinished in case someone can do it; if not, pray for me, the most sinful and unworthy, to receive absolution of my sins from the man-loving God, so that through your prayers I am granted the eternal life. As for the tsar

who ordered this book, may he rule many long days here together with his faithful and newly-enlightened tsarina, and to receive the heavenly and eternal tsardom together with the holy and righteous tsars in the other world, by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ with His Father without beginning and the most Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit of His, now, and forever, and for all ages, amen.

220 *Scribal note in Tsar Ioan Alexander's Osmoglasnik.*

The note is one of the few direct indications of the continuity in the Bulgarian ruling dynasty, identifying Ioan Alexander as hailing from “both sides of the royal clan,” and indicating the growing anxiety with the ongoing Ottoman conquest. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 289–90.

The untraceable height of the divine scriptures does not come easily to the human mind, but requires above all purity, much wisdom, and distance from all things lay and polluted. And I, the low and unwise, wallowing in this vane life, who has not done a single good thing in this world, not knowing what place will admit me, made this [copy] lazily and thoughtlessly. Yet I beg you, on account of what God said, do not repay me with evil for the evil, for not the Holy Spirit wrote [this] but my earthly and stinking hand. The hands of the one who writes will rot and will be ground into powder, but the writing, even though rough, will stay forever for it is the word of God. Because of this, if something here is wrong and incorrect on account of my mind's poverty—for my mind floated elsewhere [occupied by] sly thoughts unlike you, whose minds have been opened by God to understand this writing—as you read, bless and do not curse so that with your corrections my error is staightened and then perhaps the Lord will deliver me from the fiery Hell on the day when He will come back and will say: Bring forth your deeds to receive your rewards. This book was written in the days of the faithful and Christ-loving Lord Alexander [who hails] from both sides of the royal clan, in the time when the Lord sent out the Ishmaelites all over the face of the earth and they set out, enslaved and devastated....

221 *Ephrem, Prayer-Canon for the Tsar.*

Ephrem is only known as the author of six canon-prayers, preserved in MS Chilendar 342, all containing acrostichs with his name. The “Canon-prayer for the Tsar” was used for the Serbian Despot Stephen Lazarevic, which had led some early scholars to believe that Ephrem was a Serbian. Another misattribution identified him with the Bulgarian Ephrem, who became patriarch of Serbia (1375–1379/80 and 1389–1390) and whose detailed *Life* is extant.

Predrag Mateic's careful analysis leaves no doubt that Ephrem was an otherwise unknown fourteenth-century Bulgarian author in his own right. The urgent, almost desperate tone of the "Canon-prayer for the Tsar" betrays the author's deep anxiety and concern for the future of his people. As Ivan Bozhilov has suggested, it was most likely composed for Tsar Ioan Shishman and aimed to strenghten him spiritually on the eve of the fatefull Ottoman invasion of 1388. Edition: Predrag Mateic, *Balgarskijat himnopisets Efreim of XIV vek: delo i znachenie* (Sofia, 1982), 114–23.

Canon-prayer for the Tsar

The ending of this [canon] is: "Ephrem offers to Christ prayer for the tsar."

From our broken hearts and humbled souls
we offer Thee, Tsar of everything, this song:
accept the prayer of Thee humble servants
so that we glorify Thee Greatness.

Tsar of Tsars, Lord and Master of lords,
behold us, the unworthy, and our troubles
and quickly grant the tsar strength against the enemies
so that life flows quietly and silently.

If Thou only look our way with your merciful eye,
Thou, Tsar of everything and Lord and Master of all,
the enemies will melt faster than wax
and our good tsar will gather courage against them.

Destroy completely the daring pagans
and help our tsar oh Virgin,
for he is now much aggrieved on behalf of Thee people
and offers his soul like the good shepherd he is.

All those who see Thee as strong and unfailing hope
pray diligently:
Christ Tsar of all,
send help to the tsar because he counts on Thee.

Most palatable manna, destroy the daring
of the wicked; give strength to our tsar, Lord,
so that the horn of the faithful rises high
and Thee power is glorified.

Virgin, Your people call incessantly
with humble voices: Behold our

ruin, behold our devastation and come to us
to grant victory to the tsar.

Most pure Virgin, Mother of Christ,
preserve Your flock in its our of need,
for pagan invasions and diabolic slyness
brought us low and exasperated us and we have no succor but
You, Mother of God. That is why, good Mother of the Tsar and God
Christ,
put quickly their daring to shame and give strength to the tsar—
for you have the mother's courage before her son:
that is why You are the hope of Your servants.

You are the One Holy God resting amidst the saints:
look down from the heights and free the tsar and the city
from trouble and pagan treacheries and from their malice,
and keep Your church out of harm's way until the last days.

Turn Thee eye to us quickly now, Lord, and
send help to Your servant, our tsar, this moment
for now he is laying down his soul for his people
just like Thou did, Lord.

Lord, Ishmael emulated Isaiah's insatiability,
and is now gaping to swallow Thee flock,
but Thou, the Holy One, slam his mouth shut
and grant victory and ascendancy to the tsar.

[Clear] Thee church from unseemly heresies
and give the tsar victory over the enemies, Savior;
we pray to Thee, set all of Thee people free
from any incursion of the wicked.

Virgin, Strenght of tsars, You wove
the Tsar's purple robe from your pure blood;
Beseech Him now to grant victory to the tsar,
and His peace to the city and the army.

Tsar Christ, Thou atoned for the sins of Adam and Eve
and bought us out with Thee most pure blood,
which you shed for us,
because of this, guard the tsar and your flock from harm.

Oh Tsar, fill the hearts of the tsar and his soldiers
with all kinds of joy, and grant to the people
lasting peace and to the earth abundance;
to all who sing, grant salvation.

Tsar Christ, the Tsar of tsars and Lord of lords,
strengthen the tsar in his youth and grant him long years
in his old age oh Master of all,
for he relies on you and is not ashamed.

Tsar Christ, Thee crown-bearing servant
prays to Thee and prostrates before you to deliver him
in his our of need; grant Thee assistance to him
and to all of your people for you are quick in Thee mercy.

Virgin, deliver our tsar from the pit of evil,
through the prayers of the Precursor and all of the blessed,
and be as courageous as a mother before her son,
praying to Him incessantly.

Jesus Christ, the crown-bearer calls to you
from the bottom of his heart: Save Thee people
and Thee city from trouble
for we are in dire need and hope Thou will help us.

Zion, call on the holy church of God
on behalf of the tsar and all the people:
“Life-giving Christ, strength of the tsar, deliver us from perdition!”

We, priests and people, call on Thee, oh Tsar
with broken hearts and souls to grant peace to the tsar
and serenity to the soldiers and the people.

We call on you, divine Virgin, and we pray
from the bottom of our hearts:
“Lady, have mercy on us, your servants,
and grant the tsar victory and strength against the enemies.”

Behold oh Lord, the sighs and tears of your people,
see how desperate we are and calm the raising storm;
grant help to the tsar against the enemies and peace to your church
for no one but Thou can deliver us from grief.

Now we all step forward diligently before God
and fall down before him crying, suffused in tears,

pour out our hearts, and say: "We sinned and trespassed against the law,
we did not keep Thee commandments
and followed the whims of our hearts;
yet Thou, big-hearted God that You are,
look at Thee servants, at your property,
and behold the plight of Thee daughter, Thee church,
behold the desolation and the grief of Thee people,
behold the desperate need of our tsars, for the enemies
have opened their mouths against them, wishing to
eat them alive!" Crush their jaws now,
and bring shame back on their heads,
for they did not place Thee, Lord, before themselves.
We, Thee true people and sheep flock call out laud:
"Hasten and deliver us!" for only Thou
can deliver us from grief.

Tsar of everything, turn toward us Thee merciful eye
and grant the tsar daring courage
before the wicked and depraved barbarian
so that every one sees that Thou are with us and will protect Thee
people.

Christ, dress up our tsar with the shirt
of eternity and joy and grant him victory
over the enemies, for Thou are the glorified
Lord of the Fathers and blessed God.

Man-loving Christ, clothe the people of Ishmael in shame
smash the pride that puts us in distress,
so that they are shamed and get to be ashamed
for waging war against us.

We will never cease to pray to you, immaculate Virgin
to take mercy and save us, your servants,
keep the tsar and his soldiers safe and sound,
and grant peace to the world.

Lord, Thou dressed the tsar in purple robe and crown,
Thou, Tsar of the ages and Creator of everything;
that is why he praises Thee intercession and offers proper thanks
so that Thou grant Thee eternal Kingdom to his tsardom.

Now we all call out to Thee, Lord and Tsar of the ages,
from the bottom of our broken hearts,
to give strength to our tsar against the enemies
and [grant] peace to the church, long life, and expansion,
so that we sing honest praises
to Thee, Tsar of the ages and Creator of everything.

Thou, Lord and Tsar of the ages, delivered us all
through Thee most pure blood, which is now our
strength against the enemies.
We spit on their heresies, praising God faithfully and
glorifying Him in all ages.

Virgin, you who intercede for all, deliver us when the time comes,
from the eternal torments of the Last Judgment;
now grant peace and quiet to the tsar and all of your people who
praise God incessantly and glorify Him for all times.

Thou, the only Tsar of Heavens and Earth and Hell,
protect the tsar from the punishment of enemies visible and invisible,
and from all evil, so that we sing to Thou and praise Thee power
for we, Thee servants, trust in Thee.

Lord and Tsar of all, once thou drowned the Pharaoh
and his entire army: how destroy the people of Ishmael
with Thee overwhelming power
and keep the flock and the tsar out of harms' way.

Creator God, be the cause of joy for our tsar
and make sure he is unhurt, safe and sound,
rejoicing through the prayers of Thee saints
for Thou are the protector of the city and Thee people;
Thou are the true Tsar of the crown-wearing tsar.

Oh Tsar, Thou are the Helper of Thee faithful and honest people;
accept this prayer for our tsar on account of the prayers
of Thee prophets and apostles, of all of the saints,
and Thee Precursor as well as of those who pleased Thee.

Mother of God, hasten to accept our prayer
and grant our tsar victory and dominance over the enemies;
to your people and city grant deliverance from evil;
so that we live our time in peace and quiet
for you are our intercessor.

Lord, look down to us from Thee well-arranged heavenly dwelling
with Thee merciful eye and grant victory to our tsars against the
barbarians

so that their repulsive and polluted faces are put to shame
and realize that every creature is safe if Thou will it.

String the bow and hasten, Thou who reign and rule
over everything, and destroy the barbarians from among Thee creatures
so that they, the shameless, learn that Thou art our Lord,
and we boast with Thee and trust in Thee; in the day of the battle
stretch above the head of the tsar Thee well-known canvas,
for Thou are God who saves our souls.

God, grant Thee judgment and Thee truth to our faithfull tsar
and to the tsar's son as well; strengthen their right hands against the
detestable enemies and bring down the latter's power,
ground them to powder, so that they realize that Thou art our God
and the One who delivers the poor from the hands of the powerful
and the destitute from poverty.

Charters

222 *Silver-sealed charter (sigillion) of Despot Alexius Slav to the Church of the Mother of God in Melnik, 1220.*

Despot Alexius Slav was a member of the ruling dynasty and a nephew of Tsar Kaloyan. After the latter's murder in 1207 and the ascension of Boril (1207–1218), his first cousin, he quarreled with the new tsar either over the crown or over the *apanage* Kaloyan granted him. Having lost out in the conflict, he made an alliance with the Latin Emperor Henry (1205–1216) and carved out a principality in southwestern Bulgaria from the domains of earlier lords, Dobromir Chriz and the *sevastocrator* Strez. He first settled in the stronghold of Tsepina. As his domain and confidence grew, however, some time after 1214 he moved to a more comfortable residence in the affluent town of Melnik. After Ioan Asen II established Bulgarian supremacy in the region in 1230, Slav acknowledged his overlordship but kept his autonomy. Seeking spiritual protection to bolster his political position as Latin power declined, he founded and endowed generously ecclesiastical establishments in his domain. It is unclear who granted him the title of despot, the Latin Emperor Henry (1206–1216) or Tsar Kaloyan (1197–1207), but Slav had enough self-confidence to issue such a document. The charter outlines the power that Slav wielded over the land and people in his domain and the immunities he was willing to confer on his foundation. Edition: J. B. Papadopoulos and Arcadius Vatopedinos, eds., “Un

acte officiel du despote Alexis Sthlavos au sujet du couvent de Spéléotissa près de Melenikon,” *Spisanie na Balgarskata Akademija na Naukite* 45 (1933), 4–6.

Those who desire wellbeing derived from temporary things and busy themselves, rejoicing, with transient and ephemeral affairs, end speedily and pass away like a dream. But those who, along with wellbeing, take care of the [spiritual] goods and love the magnificence of the house of God and the place where His glory resides, according to the psalm-singer David, they will make their own glory even grander, and will collect a small spiritual reward as well. The One who said “The Lord says: I will glorify the ones who glorify me” will not be deceived. And so we, after resettling from Tsepina to this estate of ours Melnik, desired to build from the foundations an honorable monastery and gather in it a crew of diligent men who would perform prayers and remembrances for us and our parents and all those who reason and believe in piety. We quickly built it, by God’s will, in a section of Melnik, by erecting a temple and naming it after our most pure Lady, the Mother of God *Speleotissa*, and entrusted it to the then monk and archimandrite Paul Claudiopolitos, who later became metropolitan, and installed as its current abbot the monk Pachomius Kokiariis.

To this monastery we granted the village called Katuniza along with those who live in it, to own it from that point and in the future with all of its customary and judicial rights, together with its environs and its entire possessions. The monks who dwell there in harmony of thought will have all the revenue from it for their needs and for all of their services, as well as for lighting candles in the monastery and whatever else they may require. To this we added holy images, sacred books and vessels, and other things and beasts of burden, which are to be listed in detail in the inventory, so that our lordship is remembered yearly and our parents are mentioned as well. Furthermore, over and above these things we granted to the above-mentioned monastery an orchard in Zagorie, from the ecclesiastical domain, formerly belonging to the already mentioned metropolitan Paul.³⁷⁷

Because the monks residing in this honorable monastery requested that they were not subjected and subordinated to the bishop and the

³⁷⁷ If the property was formerly in the domain of metropolitan Paul it could not have been in northern Bulgaria, traditionally designated with the term “Zagorie” but would have been located somewhere in Thrace. The term is therefore to be understood as “across the mountains.”

*practor*³⁷⁸ at any time we too deemed this necessary and command through this *sigillion* of ours that neither the bishop nor the *practor* have the power to enter the village or the monastery to seek out anything or to request anything, be it recruitment, or provisioning cattle, or corvée, or *parangaria*, or *psomosomia*,³⁷⁹ or any other demand or request for work at any time; nor are they to list the monks and the residents of the villages as subject to any and all taxation and tax deliverables. The bishop too will have no right to enter or touch [anything] in this monastery or the said village, or, in his capacity of a bishop make any requests on canonical grounds or for another reason, apart from [investigating] spiritual sin that might have been committed by them, except when he is called by the monks. [Then] he should enter without remuneration and do the inquiry in a just and canonical manner, and leave without touching anything. He should have no access to the monastery; he should only be mentioned [during service and should] confirm the abbot that currently governs this monastery, which after our death should be named a despot's and tsar's monastery by a ruler's hand.³⁸⁰

Besides, those who in future times would wish to do harm to what we now sanctify and confirm with this *sigillion* of ours, as well as anything else that in the future might be added by other persons, be they magnates, metropolitans, nobles, monks, or lay folk, or simply anyone whoever they might be and whatever they might be, may God the Judge of all subject them to His vengeful wrath and [may] His sword flash justly, striving for revenge. It would be a shame and an insult for those who have preferred the divine and the better destiny to be harmed and tramped upon by lay folks. We, therefore, command that such things do not happen in the said monastery not for any other reason, but for the piety and dignity of the monastic life. Those desiring to go against what we have established should be driven out of these parts. Similarly, those who might wish to set foot in the monastery to disturb some of its affairs will call on themselves the indignation of the Lord and the curses of the saints of all ages to this day. This monastery and everything that is in it is, as it was said, a despot's and a tsar's, and depends on his [the despot's] person. Even the metropolitan, if he is not a relative of mine, should not interfere and claim hereditary rights over

³⁷⁸ Slav's chief tax-collecting official.

³⁷⁹ Different types of rent in labor service.

³⁸⁰ I.e., receive perpetual royal confirmation of its possessions, immunities, and exemptions.

it. Only the monks should have the right to inherit and by the advice and desire of all the most worthy of them should be installed as abbot and confirmed, as we already said, by the current metropolitan.

On account of all this, therefore, we issued, signed, and sealed this *sigillion* of ours and gave it to the monastery as an eternal arrangement in the month of January, eight *indiction*, in the year 6728 [1220].

Written and signed, Alexius Despot Slav

Charter of Tsar Ioan Asen II (1218–1241) to the monastery of the Mother of God (Vatoped), 1230. 223

The charter was issued, probably as part of a whole batch of privileges, to the monastery of Vatoped in Mount Athos during the triumphal circuit of Ioan Asen II soon after his victory over Theodore Ducas Comnenos in 1230. Asen's hold on these newly acquired territories with diverse population controlled by powerful regional lords with sympathies for the growing power of the Byzantines of Nicaea was quite precarious and he sought to curry favor with the monks of Mount Athos to help legitimize it. Edition: Michael Laskaris, *Vatopedskata gramota na Ivan Asen II* (Sofia, 1930), 5.

My tsardom willed to grant to the holy monastery of the most holy Mother of God called Vatoped, which is situated in the Holy Mountain, the village called Semalto, which is in the province of Ser, so that this monastery owns and rules over the village with its people and all its customary rights, and *stasi*,³⁸¹ and appurtenances, and revenues, with a sovereign and unalienable power for as long as my tsardom lives. As for those sent out by my tsardom at all times to collect tribute and do what needs to be done for my tsardom, that is, *practors*, *sevasts*,³⁸² *dukes*,³⁸³ *katepans*,³⁸⁴ one-tenth tax collectors, *psars*,³⁸⁵ *apokrisiaries*,³⁸⁶ *apodoharies*,³⁸⁷ and all others from small to great, none of them should have power to enter, nay, even set foot in the properties of this holy monastery, and neither write [names in the tax records], nor collect

³⁸¹ The properties of a household.

³⁸² The title had devolved at the time and designated a member of the court elite.

³⁸³ Governors of provinces.

³⁸⁴ Governors of provincial districts.

³⁸⁵ Dog-breeders for the royal kennels.

³⁸⁶ Royal messengers.

³⁸⁷ Collectors of taxes paid in kind.

taxes, nor [take] *komod*,³⁸⁸ nor *mitata*,³⁸⁹ nor *apodohia*,³⁹⁰ nor wine, nor bread, nor fodder, nor the one-tenth tax, nor call the people to corvée or any other work for my tsardom, neither them nor their horses, nor their oxen, nor their asses. All the people of this monastery should have every full liberty and should be ruled by the current honorable and Christ-loving abbot Dositei and the future honorable and Christ-loving abbots after him. As for tax, *komod*, *ariko*,³⁹¹ corvée and the rest of the taxes and tributes due according to the laws of my tsardom they should give them all to and work for this holy monastery and no one should interfere. Whoever harms them will suffer the great anger of our tsardom. . . . Month of April.

+ Asen, tsar of Bulgarians and Greeks +

- 224 *Charter of Tsar Ioan Asen II to the commune of Dubrovnik, shortly after 1230.* This privilege to the city of Dubrovnik was issued after Ioan Asen II established control over the commercial routes along which Dubrovnik's merchants carried their overland trade. The charter favors Dubrovnik with duty-free trade and provides information about its traders' interests and the seats of Bulgarian territorial administration. Edition: Gregory Ilinskij, *Gramoti bolgarskih tsarej* (Moscow, 1911; 2nd ed., London: Variorum Reprints, 1970). Other translations into English: *MB*, 235–7.

My tsardom gives this decree to the country of Dubrovnik and to the beloved and loyal guests of my tsardom, so that they can travel over my tsardom's entire domain with any kind of goods, export and import any kind of goods, and transport any kind of goods, and come to any land and province of my tsardom, that is to Bdin, Branichevo, or Belgrade; or go to Tarnov and the entire Zagorie,³⁹² or reach even to Preslav and the territory of Karvuna, or the territory of Krun, or that of Borui, or Adrianopolis and Dimotika, or the territory of Skopie, or that of Pilep or Devol, or Albania, or if they go to Thessaloniki. Everywhere they can buy and sell freely and without any harm and there will be no prohibitions against them in all provinces of my tsardom, but they should be able to buy and sell without problems as loyal and beloved

³⁸⁸ Either basic land tax or payment in grain.

³⁸⁹ Obligation to provide roof, food, and supplies to anyone travelling on the tsar's business.

³⁹⁰ The cut of the tax collector from taxes collected in kind.

³⁹¹ Court or judicial fine.

³⁹² I.e., northern Bulgaria.

guests of my tsardom. Whoever causes them any harm in any way in the passes or in the markets or anywhere else, against the law of trade, let it be known that he is an enemy of my tsardom and there will be no mercy [for him] but he will suffer the great wrath of my tsardom.

+ Asen, tsar of Bulgarians and Greeks +

Charter to the monastery of Zograph, sixteenth-seventeenth century forgery, citing Tsar Ioan Asen II as a donor. 225

This forgery, composed for the same reasons as the charters in the name of Kaliman and Constantine Asen translated below—to prove the monastery’s rights to land possessions and privileges to the Ottoman authorities—incorporates several excerpts from authentic documents and supplements them with oral history material, which amounts to an almost annalistic work. Edition: *BSM*, 540–46 (excerpts).

And as Tsar Ioan of Tarnov heard about the miracles, he marveled at the deeds of the holy martyr³⁹³ who grants cure to those who seek his miracle-working image. He went [there] together with the patriarch of Tarnov Theophilactus. They set out in good spirits and came to the Holy Mount of Athos where the holy icon lies, painted by the Holy Spirit. They fell on their knees and bowed to him and with many tears and sighs offered him a gift, ten kilos³⁹⁴ of gold coins, and this they presented to the holy icon made not by a human hand. They delighted, with great joy praised the Lord God and the holy great martyr of Christ George, and made a feast of the holy martyr of Christ George in the month of April, on the twenty-third day.

They erected a *bula*³⁹⁵ of St George by the sea close to the well dug up earlier by a certain Philip and John, and put a sign of St George on the eastern side, and of Philip on the western side. [Then they] came to the brook near Ioan’s edifice, called “the tower.” In the gorge of the brook there is a great rock. There they put another *bula* of St George, on the gold-sealed decree of the pious Tsar Ioan of Tarnov...

A tsar’s decree: and they set out along the way of the pious tsar Ioan of Tarnov, with gold seal...

Then came the pious and Christ-loving tsar Stephen of Serbia, who ruled over the Bulgarian and the Greek lands and the entire universe, in

³⁹³ St George, Zograph’s patron.

³⁹⁴ A measure of weight, about five modern kilograms.

³⁹⁵ A mound?

the year 6859 [1351], fourth *indiction*, and called up Gregory, the abbot of Zograph. The abbot came to Chilendar with the elder Ioan. The pious Tsar Stephen said to the abbot of Zograph: “Show me, father abbot, the golden bulls of the pious tsars and the blessed patriarchs that you have from olden times!” And the abbot brought to him two golden bulls, one in Greek and the other in Bulgarian. . . .

And again the pious tsars and sacred patriarchs set out on the road and found water in a certain place. The pious Tsar Ioan desired to drink water. His servant brought him water. The pious tsar tasted it and drank, and said: “Write here my name with a golden seal.” And they built a cairn over the water and called it Ioan’s cairn. . . .

Ioan pious tsar of Tarnov, in Christ God faithful tsar of all Bulgarians.

226 *Charter attributed to Tsar Kaliman (1241–1246), sixteenth-century forgery based on authentic documents.*

After the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, the authorities generally acknowledged the possessions and immunities of ecclesiastical foundations if they could be authenticated with written instruments. As many institutions had their early donation charters damaged, lost, or rotten, the practice was introduced to compile forgeries from documents extant in bad shape to testify to the foundation’s claims, and affix to them the preserved (because made of metal) seals of the lost original charters for authenticity. This sixteenth-century forgery sports an authentic gold seal of Ioan Asen II, but the text, listing the possessions of the Bulgarian monastery of St George on Mount Athos and attributing the charter to his son Kaliman Asen (1241–1246), is a later compilation. Its bombastic language indicates that it was meant to impress with the station of its donor. The scribe used terminology in step with contemporary Ottoman usage. The description of properties and rights, however, is quite accurate and was evidently based on collation of detailed registers, which, unfortunately, did not carry the weight of a donation charter. Edition: *BSM*, 605–8.

The pious and Christ-loving Tsar Asen, sovereign of Tarnov and the entire universe, of Bulgarians and Greeks, and of those in Moldovlachia, and in the Hungarian land and Buda, and even to Venice, wields power given him by God and extending throughout the entire universe. Not precious stones, pearls and jewels adorn the one who has ascended to the tsar’s dignity but what pertains to the divine magnificence, the diligence and care of God’s holy temples and monasteries, in which one resides in virtue, as well as the incessant praise of [our] God Christ, the Tsar of all, performed by the pious and resting in peace tsars, because in these [temples and monasteries] the divinity is honored with gentle

wisdom and much diligence; for that reason they are given alms with much generosity.

Following on this path like the father of my tsardom, Tsar Asen now resting in blessed peace, and like the other Orthodox tsars who ruled before him, and striving more than every one else in my care for the holy and honored things, I gave abundantly from what the divinity had granted me to the churches and monasteries of God, in which one resides in virtue, and most of all to those that are in the Holy Mountain where there nothing else is done but offering great praise to God. Among these there is a monastery honored with the name of the great and famous martyr George where the divine and Orthodox praise of God is sang in the Bulgarian language. My blessed father Tsar Asen, now resting in blessed peace, had extended his generosity to it, and I thought about giving to this monastery many properties on the Holy Mountain, but feared excommunication, for that was condemned by the council and by the holy patriarchs and the pious tsars, and by our grandfather Ioan, the great tsar of the Bulgarians.³⁹⁶

However, I will give many outlying properties to my monastery [as something] I desire with God's permission. First of all, I gave them the place called Privitsa, the property [*metoch*] and the village with all of its rights and revenues from the village, with the priests who are in the village, so that every income from it goes to the monastery, as well as what comes from the lake and the mill in Handak³⁹⁷ and what is derived from the hunting grounds in Marmar:³⁹⁸ all that should go to the monastery, including what is used for the holy food of the monks who reside in it. His commemoration³⁹⁹ and that of the other tsars resting in blessed peace should be performed piously. Gold seal.

Also, in the town of Serres I gave them the property and the temple of St Nicholas, [which lies near the properties administered for the authorities by] the clerics Kaloyan, Manuel, and Constantine, and eighteen shops in Kaloyan's commercial street. Kaloyan is responsible that the revenue from the shops goes to the monastery.

Also, I gave them fishing rights on the Danube, at the estuary, where great sturgeons are caught, and a wharf at Nicopolis, as well as Jacob's quarter and Theodore's quarter, and there fifteen shops as

³⁹⁶ The meaning of this stament is not clear.

³⁹⁷ A settlement on the river Struma.

³⁹⁸ A district of of the town of Serres.

³⁹⁹ Of the tsar issuing the charter.

well. Peter the Logothete will be the supervisor so that the revenues from the wharf and from fishing [rights] go to the monastery. Decree of the tsar, gold seal.

Also, I gave them in the city of Sardakia, that is, Sofia, the metropoly and the church of the holy and great martyr George and [that of] St Nicholas above Copper Market, and there I gave them [the revenue from] twenty shops, [as well as] the Cattle Market. Sir Valcho and Sir Stoyan are to take care that what the metropoly and the shops make is collected, and deliver it to the monastery.

Also, the village of Tchelopechene: I gave them property there too so that the revenues from the village and the property always go to the monastery.

Also, the village of Gorni Lozen: there too I gave them the village and the property of the temple of St Nicholas. Sir Vladislav should take care that everything that comes from the village gets sent to the monastery.

Also, from the village of Dolni Lozen, whatever revenue there is, everything should be sent to the monastery together. By the tsar's decree no one there will have power over the properties I gave them. Gold seal.

Also, I gave them the place Lihnidon, called the city of Ohrid. Here I empowered Archbishop Makarius and the clerics Manuel and Stamatius to supervise, so that all of the revenues from the city, the lake, and the fishing place at Struga should be sent to the monastery. Tsar's decree, gold seal.

Also, I gave them in the city of Thessaloniki the quarter of the cleric Ducas with ten shops and the quarter of Skerlet, ten shops there too, and Sir Constantine's quarter, with ten shops too. Everything that is collected from these quarters Sir Constantine should send to the monastery. Tsar's decree, gold seal.

And again I gave them property in Ormilja, here I gave the property and the village, and whatever comes from the property and the village, everything together to be sent to the monastery. There lies the temple of St Nicholas.

I, the pious Tsar Asen, sovereign of all Bulgarians and Greeks, ordered with God's help that in the monastery called Zograph, which is in the Holy Mountain of Athos, and is a temple of the great martyr of Christ George, a tower was built, which should be called in the name of my son Michael, that is, Michael's Tower. Tsar's decree, gold seal.

And I intended to give many properties to my monastery, but feared excommunication, for it has been forbidden for a long time, and decided by the council, by the holy patriarchs and pious tsars, so I gave them properties outside, according to God's decision. I ordered that the place called Ioan Selim's river was fenced from the seashore to the well, to the *bula* [?] of St George; and from here above Philip's vineyard to the cross that is on the top of the hillock; three markings: the *bula* of St George, of Pimin, and of Philip; from here up the great road to the rock on the east side above the way, from there to the *bula* of St George and Pimin; from there, from Moses' cherry tree on the road all the way to Ioan's stone heap; and from Ioan's stone heap along the way to the old tower and behind it up the hillside; and there it leaves the *bula* and goes up, across the hillock, where it divides, and there is the cross; and across the gully down the Great River to St George's mill, and from there all the way down to the sea. Tsar's decree, gold seal. I order the way I see fit.

And if anyone goes against this decree or someone plans to violate it and swears a false oath, he shall not get the mercy of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ on Judgment Day, and may the curse of the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nicaea fall upon him, and may he be counted equal to the traitor Judas. My tsardom has this piously laid out in red ink and confirmed with this gold seal. Month of February, on the second day, first *indiction*, year 6700 [1192].

+ Ioan Kaliman in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians and Greeks Asen +

Charter of Tsar Constantine Tich Asen (1257–1277) for the monastery of St. George at Virgino Brdo, late-fourteenth or early fifteenth century forgery based on thirteenth-century documents. 227

This charter confirms the possessions and rights of the monastery of St George in the vicinity of Skopje, present-day Macedonia, and adds new rights and properties. The area was most likely in Constantine's apanage before he became tsar in 1257. The forged charter was collated at least a century later than the tsar's time, but it appears to have incorporated verbatim earlier documents and excerpts from registers and gives a good idea of the process of accumulation of ecclesiastical domains, rights, and privileges from the second part of the thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth centuries. Edition: *BSM*, 581–87.

...and the other pious..., which were built and attended to by the holy and Orthodox tsars. A proper deed is one that promotes love of God

by granting wealth and treasures to the holy and divine churches, as did the holy and Orthodox Greek and Bulgarian tsars and the *župans*, princes, and kings of the Serbian land, who had love and mercy and took care of the holy and divine churches.

In the same way my tsardom, emulating those pious and holy tsars who were before me, pours over them not unsubstantial gifts and enriches them. As my tsardom journeyed down to the Lower Land,⁴⁰⁰ my tsardom found that the monastery of the great martyr of Christ, St George Brzi,⁴⁰¹ built by the holy Tsar Roman [I Lacapenos] on Virgino Brdo, facing the city of Skopje above the Serava, had lost all of its rights and properties due to the invasion of Agarene foreigners, and had crumbled to its foundations, but then had been rebuilt anew, restored, and glorified by the holy Tsar Lord Alexios [I Comnenos], and has been supported and presented with gifts by many Orthodox tsars.

Barlaam, archimandrite of this honorable temple, brought out before my tsardom the rulings and the golden bulls of the holy and Orthodox tsars who had been before me, and of the kings; [these] of the holy Tsar Roman, Tsar Diogenes, Tsar St Peter, Tsar Lord Nicephoros, and of the rest, of the holy Tsar Alexius, of Tsar Kaloyan, Tsar Lord Manuel, Tsar Lord Theodore, Tsar Lord Isaac,⁴⁰² the holy Simeon Nemanja, grandfather of my tsardom, of Tsar Vatatses, and Tsar Kaliman. My tsardom accepted [the charters] benevolently and read [them], and neither changed anything nor broke anything but added to all and confirmed [them] even more firmly than all the above mentioned tsars and kings.

The people who reside in the city of Skopje [and belong to] the holy and most glorious great martyr of Christ George Brzi, a bringer of victory in battle, should not be asked to provide as *tsarina*⁴⁰³ any kind of work, nor should they give *priplata*,⁴⁰⁴ not should be troubled by any *sevast*, *practor*, prince, *kastrophylox*,⁴⁰⁵ *vatah*, or *topstikal*⁴⁰⁶ [and these] should neither judge nor bind nor take any fee or other taxes. In the

⁴⁰⁰ Southern and southwestern Bulgaria.

⁴⁰¹ St George “the quick” or “the speedy.”

⁴⁰² Byzantine emperors from the tenth to the early thirteenth centuries.

⁴⁰³ Anything due to the ruler in kind, money, or service.

⁴⁰⁴ Additional fee.

⁴⁰⁵ Fortress commander.

⁴⁰⁶ Judicial officials.

beginning...⁴⁰⁷ the well... and Slivnitsa and its source, and the fair on November 21: in these districts neither a *vladelets*⁴⁰⁸ nor anyone else should touch anything. If anyone dares and touches, will be punished by the wrath of my tsardom and will be considered disloyal to my tsardom.

The village of Dvigod along with the villages of Dlabnitsa and Chere-shoveni with the vineyards, the fields, the mills and the meadows, with the mountains and the grazing grounds, and with all their rights and customs. The boundaries of these villages are: from the Black Forest where the gully descends toward Dlabnitsa, to the hill [and the] marble cross and down the divide to the road to Bitolja, across the hillock of Kavian following the road to Ralitsi and then to the heights of Rudinata, and the Long Meadow, to Gradishte and the Red Rock.

The village of Pobazhda with its vineyards, fields, mills and grazing grounds with all of their rights and customs.

The village of Kondovo and the village of Dlabnitsa and the village of Raoche with all of their customs.

The village of Glumovo with its *metoch*, vineyards, fields, mills and all of their customs.

The village of ... [lacuna] with its *metoch*, vineyards, fields, and all of their rights and customs.

The village of Zhdune in the forest and with the hamlets Bli-zhinsko, Mokroseki, and Great Podom, with the *popovjani*⁴⁰⁹ and the vineyards, fields, mills, winter grounds, summer grounds, mountains, hunting grounds, fishing place, and the *zabels*,⁴¹⁰ with all their rights and customs.

The village of Sushitsa with the *popovjani*, the village and its vineyards, fields, and mountains, and all of their customs.

The village of Gradechnitsa with the *popovjani* and its vineyards and fields, and all of their customs.

The village of Brod where there is a property named after the Visitation of the Mother of God, with its fields, vineyards, mills, meadows, summer grounds, winter grounds, river crossing [fees], bridge [fees],

⁴⁰⁷ Here the compiler seems to have lost the thread in a damaged document and continued to copy what was legible.

⁴⁰⁸ Thirteenth-fourteenth century term for a lord or landowner.

⁴⁰⁹ The meaning is unclear: either dependent people belonging to ecclesiastical estates or dependent farmers with the status of clerics.

⁴¹⁰ Most likely household property created on cleared lands.

the hunting and fishing grounds, the market and the fair that is held on September 10, the Sunday's market and the tax from it, with all of their rights and customs. Brod's boundary begins from Gradishta in the Dark Valley, then to Plesh, then to the Goat's Wall, then to Peshets, to the meadow, to Belko's dung heap, to Shipkovitsa, to Vinishta, to Orlitsa, to Basil's settlement, up the hill, to Kalavar, to Gledula, to Dushche, and from Kichava to Theodore's gorge.

In the district of Prilep the village Krpa Vlasi and in it the property of the Savior granted by Tsar Roman with the fields, mills, *zabels*, summer grounds, winter grounds, mountains and all of its rights and customs. Its boundaries are: From Ushcha at the Gorno Gradishte, then Dragan's church, Chrevsko Gradishte, the Cross, along the ridge, to Mochnatets, up the ridge to Sadishta, above Tichovets, on Dedino Usoe, to the Great Rock, to Vilski Kladenets, between the two Eleni, on the *preslap*, and up the Gorna Elena ridge.

Zdune, Sushitsa, Gradechnitsa, Brod with Slansko, Barabaso and Krpa, all these places are *parik's*⁴¹¹ places, that is, *pridalishki*. No one should interfere, nor should touch anything, nor should sell outside [of the monastery's domain], neither field nor vineyard.

In the district of Polog the village of Rechitsi: it too was a gift of Tsar Roman to St George, with its vineyards, fields, mills, orchards, haylands, *zabels*, mountains, hunting grounds, and all of its revenues and customs. No *kephalia*⁴¹² should interfere, nor any *vladelets* of my tsardom, nor the *vladeltsi* who are lords in my tsardom: they should not enter the village of Rechitsi, neither to judge, nor to bind, nor to collect fees, nor to collect the one-tenth tax, but all licit tax and collection should be given to the church [of St George]. The boundary of this village is as follows: from the spring of river of Rechitsi to the gully on the right, down the ridge of Oslenik, to Ioan's gorge, along the furrowed grounds, then between Preslop and Ograzhdenik along the ridge, to the source of river Palchishte, and down the river to Kataphiga, up the hill of Lisechko Kraishte, where Psets goes down Lisechko Kraishte, down the forest, to the well, to Deep Gorge, and from Deep Gorge to... from the northern side across the forest and across the river Velika, down Velika to Htetov's furrow... of Tochil, who... Leskovjane... up the ridge... then to the right and down the road across the ridge to the

⁴¹¹ Dependent peasants with servile status and usufruct of their lands.

⁴¹² Provincial governor; also referred to as *duke*.

upper...right...along the road. Dry Mountain...down the forest of the river Rechitsa all the way to its source. All this is *parik's* place.

In Gorni Polog the village of ...with its fields, vineyards, mills, and all their customs.

The village of Tochil and the said mountain with all of its customs.

The village of Banitsa with its fields, vineyards, mills, and all of their customs.

The village of ...yane with the mountain called Marmor, with all of its customs.

The village of Nahovo with the *pariks* and the fields, the meadows, the fishing grounds, and all of their customs.

The village of Tavor Gradishte, and with its hay fields, fields, meadows, marshy lake, *zabels*, hunting grounds, fishing grounds, and all their customs.

The villages of Bistritsa and Babuna with their grazing grounds, summer grounds, winter grounds, and all of their customs.

The village of ...St Ioan the Theologian with its grazing grounds and fields and all of their customs.

The village of Dabnitsa with its reed places, fields, *zabels*, and with all of its customs...property under...of St Basil, with its vineyards, fields, and with all of its customs, and the fishing place...Katunska...with the fields, meadows, hunting grounds, and all its customs.

...property of St Luke...with all of its customs. The property of St Nicholas in Velbuzhd in Kolusha with the vineyards and all of its customs.

The village of Lazheni with its vineyards, fields, and all of its customs.

The village of Rani Lak with its fields and hay fields and all of its customs.

The villages of Vitino and Vineh with all of their customs.

My tsardom saw and understood that all [these properties and rights] have been granted, confirmed, and written down by the holy and Orthodox tsars and kings who lived before me, and my tsardom follows in their steps, prays, and bows, begging for the mercy and assistance of the holy great martyr of Christ George Brzi, the victory-bearer in battle, and I added to his holy church the village of Kozarevo. My tsardom found out that it has formerly been granted by the holy Tsar Roman, together with the villages of Barovo, Sinsko, and the church of St Ioan Chrysostomos with all of their hamlets, vineyards, fields,

orchards, mills, hay fields, *zabels*, the hunting and fishing grounds, and the mountains and all of their rights and customs.

My tsardom added the village of Kalugerovo as well with its vineyards, fields, *zabels*, and all of its customs.

Also, . . . in Zlatitsa, the village Kalugerov Dol, and in it the church of St George shall be . . . tax of my tsardom and . . . just like . . . there are . . . to the holy . . . the pass . . . revenue . . . neither in the *zhupa*,⁴¹³ nor in any town or village of St George's no *vladelets* under the power of my tsardom shall judge, nor shall . . . the people of St George, but for any liability judge shall be the current abbot, and he shall collect any debt [owed] by the abbot's *otroks*.⁴¹⁴ If someone is found to have forcefully passed judgment on a person belonging to St George or give our *otrok*, or binds him without the sentence of the abbot's tribunal, may God's curse be on his head and that of the holy Orthodox tsars, and he must pay to the state treasury nine gold coins for the injury . . . who slander each other before the *vladelets* or . . . which is given, no *vladelets* shall take from the church's people but only the church shall take from its people. The people of St George are not to be harmed, nor are the priests and the *popovjani*, which are under the power of St George, nor is any bishop to interfere or collect tax, or put the priests under interdict . . . to the bishop memorial mentioning, and to the *exarch* the entire tax from the priests: all this to belong to St George. Neither the *exarch* nor the first priest should interfere or enter the villages and the properties to take something on spiritual grounds from the priests, but all that shall belong to the church of St George . . . for, furthermore, any fee . . . tax is granted to the church and . . . his truth . . . feud . . . kidnapping of virgins and theft of horses the church should collect from its people and this [fee for] feud[ing] shall not be taken from the villages except from the claimants and not without a court sentence. The properties of St George shall not pay *priselitsa*⁴¹⁵ nor *volobershtina*,⁴¹⁶ nor *perper*,⁴¹⁷ nor *dimnina*.⁴¹⁸

If someone enters a property of St George in any village without permission of the archimandrite, or goes into the mountain, or the

⁴¹³ Administrative district.

⁴¹⁴ Peasant bound by personal dependency.

⁴¹⁵ Tax or fee for resettling.

⁴¹⁶ Tax or fee on oxen.

⁴¹⁷ Tax with unclear meaning.

⁴¹⁸ Most likely hearth tax.

grazing grounds, or the *zabels*, or the fishing or hunting grounds, or the forests, or cuts down a tree in the church's preserve, or builds a mill at the church's stream, which derives from the church's spring, or grazes his horse on church's land, or runs water through church's land, or plows a field without the abbot's permission, may God's curse be on his head, and St George's, and [that of] the above mentioned holy and Orthodox tsars and kings, and let him pay to the state treasury six *perpera*.

All these appurtenances, given as gifts by the said holy and Orthodox tsars and kings and added to by my tsardom, and granted by other rulers so that they may be [mentioned] in the memorials, all these St George Brzi, the victory-bearer, and his current honorable archimandrite should govern upon the presentation of this golden bull so that my tsardom has him [St George] as intercessor and assistant in all afflictions and wars.

I forbid the officials sent at all times to the provinces and cities of my tsardom to take anything, enter, stop, or abuse properties, villages, or people of St George, nor... in the provinces of my tsardom, neither *sevast*, nor *duka*, nor *kastrophilact*, nor *practors*, nor prince, nor *topshikal*, nor wine-collector, nor comes with horses, nor strator, nor a town messenger, nor a scribe, nor *apodochator*,⁴¹⁹ nor *gerakar*,⁴²⁰ nor *psar*,⁴²¹ nor one-tenth collectors of honey or sheep, nor tax on hay, nor tax on sheds, nor tax on shelter, nor *komod*,⁴²² nor *mitata*,⁴²³ nor tax on sheds, nor tax on oxen, nor tax on grain, nor on wine, nor on meat, nor on cheese, nor shall they [be recruited to] build a stronghold, nor to guard it, nor to guard jails, nor to plow, nor to dig vineyards, nor to mow grass, nor to harvest, and *tsarina* should not be taken from the people of St George, neither at the markets, nor fee for crossing bridges should be taken, nor a man should be taken [to work *corvée*], nor a horse, an ox, or an ass.

All these favors my tsardom gave with the granting of this golden bull for as long as the name of Christ is glorified on earth. After the death of my tsardom, whoever God wills to put on the throne of my

⁴¹⁹ Collector of taxes in kind or official in charge of storage facilities.

⁴²⁰ Royal falconer.

⁴²¹ Breeder of dogs for the royal kennels.

⁴²² Either common property tax, or hearth tax (another name for *dimnina*), or additional fee paid for the assessment of the one-tenth grain tax.

⁴²³ Service tax, obligation to provide lodging, food, and transportation for officials on royal business.

tsardom or some of the relatives of my tsardom, I beg them to not transgress against this golden bull or trample upon it, but to grant even more and renew and confirm with diligence, because it is a pious act on the part of the holy and Orthodox tsars and kings.

And if someone is found who, at the devil's instigation, goes against this decree and tramples upon this golden bull, may God be his enemy and His most pure Mother in this century and in the future one of the Last Judgment and the Second Coming and may St George, instead of being his [help] in battle, be his enemy here and at the Last Judgment and may he be...cursed three times by the Lord God Almighty and by His Mother, and by the Power of the honest and life-giving Cross, and by the four evangelists, the twelve apostles, the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nicaea, and the said Orthodox tsars and kings.

It was written and signed...of St George Brzi, victory-bearer for confirmation for endless [ages].

Constantine in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of the Bulgarians
Asen

228 *Charter of Tsar Ioan Alexander confirming the grant of the village of Hantak to the monastery of Zograph on Mount Athos, 1342.*

With this golden bull Tsar Ioan Alexander (1331–1371) granted the village of Hantak to the Bulgarian foundation on Mount Athos, the monastery of St George or Zograph. The charter's long rhetorical exposition hides the diminishing sponsoring power of the Bulgarian tsars whose domains were steadily shrinking, eroded by *apanages*, autonomous magnate's estates, and the encroachment of Byzantium and the Serbian and Hungarian crowns. Hantak was not in the domain of Ioan Alexander. He requested it from the Byzantine emperor as a favor and then granted it to the monastery in his name. Such favors were not uncommon in the patchwork of overlapping dominions and partial jurisdictions of the late medieval Balkans. Edition: *BSM*, 587–90.

Because it was the will of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, on the intercession of our genuine and truly most blessed Lady and Mother of God that the Holy Mount of Athos be the haven for the salvation of every Christian soul, especially the Orthodox diligently seeking refuge there and for that reason many a great and marvelous holy house was laboriously built there by pious tsars and God-fearing magnates and blessed monks, and these were adorned and enriched in every possible way with many precious stones and pearls, gold and silver, with wealth and many other rights, chattels, and real estate, so that those who live and reside in these most honorable and divine houses

live in satisfaction and abundance, singing the praises of the One God glorified in the Trinity, and the most pure and glorious Mother of His, as well as commemorating the Orthodox, Christ-loving, and resting in peace tsars and other blessed sponsors and the entire Christian nation as well. Because the sponsors of this place hail not only from one or two peoples, for it offers salvation to everyone who seeks it, it became a place where everyone poured their favors. That is why one can find there edifices of every Orthodox people and nation, above all and especially of the Greeks and the Bulgarians, but also of the Serbians, Russians, and Georgians, each having its own endowment⁴²⁴ according to their labors and even more so to their zeal. There is also the divine and most honorable house honored in the name of the holy and glorious great martyr and victory-bearer George, called Zograph.

This [house] has long been owned by the Orthodox, pious, and Christ-loving Bulgarian tsars, grandfathers and great-grandfathers of my tsardom. Each of them even to the time of my tsardom has added to it[s domain] and supported it according to their wishes for their remembrance. Since my Lord God Jesus Christ, through the mercy and intercession of His most pure Mother willed to install me on the throne of the Bulgarian tsardom, for it was my grandfather's and my great-grandfather's, my tsardom too added and gave according to my powers during all these times. But my tsardom considered all these things nothing compared to the desire for endowing it that [my tsardom] had, and [I] very much desired and considered day and night what thing or right to find and grant to this most honorable house of the holy and glorious great martyr and victory-bearer George so that it be inalienable real estate. Moreover, there was there, in the Greek country by the river Struma, a village called Hantak and it was known to my tsardom that many have asked for it in former times, and the village was also desired by former tsars and kings, who were willing to pay for it many thousands, but they were not able to secure it. Evidently, such has been the will of the saint.

Now, however, because it was fitting that this village became part of the endowment of this most honorable house of the holy and glorious great martyr and victory-bearer George, my tsardom, turning to the generosity of God and His most pure Mother, and the intercession and assistance of the saint as well as to the true and sincere love that my

⁴²⁴ Literally: *upomenanie*, “remembrance.”

tsardom had with the most high Greek tsar, the beloved brother and in-law of my tsardom, Lord Andronikos Palaeologos before his death, and after his death my tsardom did not forsake that love but doubled it and bestowed it upon his son, the most high tsar of the Greeks Kaloyan Palaeologos, the beloved nephew and in-law of my tsardom, so my tsardom daringly sent to him and requested from him this village of Hantak in the name of the holy and glorious great martyr and victory-bearer George, and this was done immediately, without arguing and resistance, on the contrary, with love: he granted that the village called Hantak be placed under the power of my tsardom. This is how my tsardom requested it: not through violence, or deceptively, but with love, and he, as a pious and most high tsar, understood and granted this village together with all of its territories and rights, on his own will, openly and with a proclamation of his tsardom, and through a golden bull of his tsardom so that it is inalienable and inseparable from the most honorable house of the holy and glorious great martyr and victory-bearer George, on the appeal and request of my tsardom. Also, he ordered that the fifty *perperi* pertaining to the domain of this most honorable residence, which were taken as *zhitarstvo* and *gornitsa* and *gradozidanie*,⁴²⁵ are to be abolished and not one golden coin is to be collected for as long as the said most honorable house exists.

Because my tsardom succeeded in achieving this good and long-desired wish, my tsardom willed and issued this golden bull of my tsardom through which my tsardom commands that the mentioned monastery of my tsardom is to possess and lord it over the said village of Hantak without trouble, fully, and untouchably, and firmly, and inalienably, with all of its possessions and revenues.

Also, the domain of this most honorable monastery is not to be troubled to pay the fifty *perperi*, which were paid for *zhitarstvo* and *gornitsa* and *gradozidanie*, for my tsardom requested [immunity from] them from the most high Tsar Kaloyan Palaeologos, the beloved nephew and in-law of my tsardom.

And so let there be no obstacles, and on account of the power and force of this golden bull of my tsardom the blessed monks who reside in the house of the holy and glorious great martyr and victory-bearer George are to hold and lord it over the said village without trouble and without any impediment and obstruction, with all of its possessions

⁴²⁵ Respectively grain tax, additional fee, and building permit fee.

and revenues. No one is to trouble the domain of this most honorable monastery for the payment of the fifty *perperi*, because, as it was mentioned above, my tsardom requested [immunity from] them along with our other wishes, and bound, and confirmed, and strengthened, according to our power, by the will of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the intercession of the most pure Mother of God and the assistance of the holy and glorious great martyr and victory-bearer George so that my tsardom too is linked to this holy place like the other Orthodox and pious tsars, the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of my tsardom.

For that reason this golden bull of my tsardom was issued and sent in the month of March, as a clear confirmation, in the year 6850 [1342], tenth *indiction*, and signed by our pious and pre-ordained by God tsardom.

+ Ioan, in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians
Alexander

Charter of Tsar Ioan Alexander granting possessions to the monastery of St Nicholas in Mraka, southwestern Bulgaria, December 1, 1347.

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It was customary practice that privileges granted with charters were requested by monastic communities during royal visits but the charters themselves were often issued upon the tsar's return to his capital and chancery. Why was it that this golden bull was written in Sergevtsi, a village in northern Bulgaria in the vicinity of the capital Tarnov is unclear; perhaps the place was a royal residence. Edition: *BSM*, 591–4.

It is pious and pleasing to God to demonstrate warm love to the holy and divine churches and to adorn them fittingly with tsar's gifts and charters; this pleases the Almighty God and gratifies every one.

Because of that my tsardom has a warm love and provides diligently for the divine churches, especially to the holy and assiduous assistant and partner of my tsardom, the holy and most glorious miracle-maker of Christ, the high priest Nicholas who assiduously and unflinchingly helped our tsardom in the battles fought by my tsardom. That is why my tsardom remembered the words of the prophet David, who said: "Lord, I fell in love with the beauty of Your House and the place where Your glory resides," and who also said that through the divine churches "tsars reign and the tsar's kin is elevated and their power is confirmed and the mighty dispense justice," my tsardom was filled with zeal by these words and desired to adorn these divine churches, knowing that this is good, in the manner of former tsars and holders of

the scepter of the Bulgarian tsardom who adorned [them] and issued honorable and God-guided writings, chosen golden bulls, which were brought out and read before my tsardom. As my tsardom beheld and recognized them, my tsardom was filled with zeal for that and desired to add to them and adorn them with fitting dignity, wishing to make a godly grant, as is appropriate, so that my tsardom gets enlightened and elevates not only some place and some church, and not only the great monastic mother-houses but smaller [foundations] as well, because it is precisely in them that the name of our God Jesus Christ and the Orthodox Christian faith are mentioned and praised.

Because of that my tsardom willed to grant this upright and all-covering golden bull to this monastery of my tsardom of the holy and most glorious miracle-maker and high priest Nicholas, which is in the place called Orjahovo, for its entire domain and possession and for all of its people and for all of its *rabotniki*,⁴²⁶ and for all of its *zeogelija*,⁴²⁷ and for the people from Orjahovo who reside in Sredets, and the village of Belitsa to the boundary of Kostinbrod, and the village of Bobovtsi, and the village of Drustrjane, and Konoraz, and the hay meadows in Rakita, and Blatechnitsa with its fallow, wherever they might be, be they *pariks*, or *otroks*, or *technitars*,⁴²⁸ or any kind of people indeed, or fields, or vineyards, or hay fields, or mills, or gardens, or fenced places, or fallows, or fishing pools, or walnut groves, or any other possessions and properties of this monastery: over all of them this monastery of the holy high priest and miracle-maker Nicholas is to rule.

As for the *bolijars* and *rabotniki* of my tsardom, great and small, who are sent in all times to the entire country to collect tax and request all kinds of services to my tsardom, that is, the current *sevasts* of this province, *dukes*,⁴²⁹ *catepans*,⁴³⁰ scribes, all kinds of one-tenth tax collectors, of pigs, of sheep, or honey, as well as cooks, *apodohators*,⁴³¹ *kragujars*,⁴³² *psars*, *gradars*,⁴³³ collectors, *izgonchi*:⁴³⁴ none of them is to have power to harm nor forcefully set foot in these villages and [interfere with] the

⁴²⁶ Monastery servants or officials.

⁴²⁷ Holdings of arable land.

⁴²⁸ Dependent craftsmen or artisans.

⁴²⁹ Provincial governors.

⁴³⁰ Governor of a district ranking lower than a *duke* or *kefalia*.

⁴³¹ Collector of taxes in kind or official in charge of storage facilities.

⁴³² Falconers.

⁴³³ Collectors of the building fee.

⁴³⁴ Members of the royal hunting party.

people and settlements of this monastery of my tsardom or their rights, neither to write [in the tax register] nor to collect tax, nor *komod*, nor *mitata*, nor any kind of one-tenth tax, nor bread, nor wine, nor meat, nor fodder, nor chicken, nor [force the people] themselves to do any service in my tsardom nor take their horses for corvée, nor their oxen, nor asses, nor take *podvod*,⁴³⁵ nor harm these people in any other way, for all power and rights belong to the monastery of my tsardom of St Nicholas and the current archimandrite of this monastery of the saint and whoever after him happens to be servant [of the saint] in this monastery. [The same applies to] the vineyard in Drachovo and the other vineyard in Skrino and the other in the village of Diachei and the other in Zitomisk, given by a monk on occasion of his conversion. Same about the fines collected from these people of the monastery: be great or small, *fun*,⁴³⁶ or *raspust*,⁴³⁷ or *razboi*,⁴³⁸ or theft of horses, or other fees, no one should interfere with these fines, neither the *sevasts* nor the *practors* of my tsardom but only the archimandrite to collect all such customs for the monastery. Also, the priests among the monastery's people are not to be interfered with, neither by the Great Church, nor by the *protopop*, nor the *exarchs*, nor by anyone else, but all of the people of this monastery of my tsardom are to reside free and have immunity for as long as the sun shines above the earth and for as long as my tsardom lives. Even after the death of my tsardom, whoever might be the heir to my tsardom, be it among the beloved children of my tsardom, or among the relatives of my tsardom, or anyone else chosen by God to sit on the throne of my tsardom, anyone among the Orthodox Christians, he should not consider abolishing or infringing upon this God-like golden bull of my tsardom, but [may he] confirm it even further and renew it as is fitting for the holy and Orthodox tsars to do, just like my tsardom did not abolish or eliminate but established, confirmed, and renewed.

And if anyone destroys or tramples upon [the monastery's privileges] may the Lord God sentence him at His righteous Court so that he is cursed by the Lord God and His most pure Mother and by all of the saints who have pleased God for centuries. For clear confirmation and pure liberty and for fast and eternal possession of all of the properties,

⁴³⁵ Monetary fee for release of the obligation to supply beasts of burden.

⁴³⁶ Fine for murder on the village's premises levied on the village community.

⁴³⁷ Court fee for authorizing divorce.

⁴³⁸ Fine for acts of robbery committed on the village's premises.

provinces, peoples, and rights, my tsardom granted this golden bull to the holy and most glorious miracle-maker and high priest of Christ Nicholas.

My tsardom wrote and signed with the tsars' customary signature and the pious and God-crowned person⁴³⁹ of my tsardom signed in the year 6856 [1347], first *indiction*, month of December, first day, Saturday.

Ioan Alexander in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians and Greeks +

The tsar decreed, Dobromir wrote in Sergevtsi, December, first day, Saturday +

230 *Charters of Tsar Ioan Alexander to monasteries in Nesebar and its environs, Black Sea coast, late 1350s.*

These charters were issued in or shortly after 1354 when, after what was to be one of the last Byzantino-Bulgarian armed clashes, the city of Nesebar, then with a mixed population of Bulgarians, Greeks, and assorted Italians, passed in the hands of Tsar Ioan Alexander along with its archbishopric, diocese, and monastic foundations. Eager to legitimize his shaky hold on the area, which was already within the striking range of the Ottoman vessels and was soon to be attacked and briefly held by yet another misguided predator, the Savoyard Count Amedeo VI, Ioan Alexander preserved, confirmed, and extended the foundations' privileges and immunities. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 140–149.

I. Charter for the monastery of the Mother of God Eleusa.

...Because of that my tsardom, treasuring, as it was said, the divine prayers of the saints more than gold and precious stone, my tsardom willed that the monks who accomplish great deeds in the honorable monastery of the most holy Mother of God Eleusa in Mesembria [Nesebar] reside in complete peace and the monastery together with the monks be granted freedom from any kind of corvée, *psomosomia*, *gradozidanie*,⁴⁴⁰ or any other kind of requirement. Also, those who happen to be in the monastery's domain, they too should enjoy complete peace. Not only that, but its boats are to be free for all times from paying customs dues. Neither the *duke*, nor any one among of the citizens of Mesembria and the foreigners residing there should dare harm the monastery, if they expect salvation from God or leniency from my tsardom...That is why my tsardom granted this present gold-sealed *sigillius* to the monastery of Eleusa for its sustenance, in the month of

⁴³⁹ Literally: *darzhava*, "state."

⁴⁴⁰ Respectively housing and building fees.

[April], [ninth] *indiction*. Apart from this, my tsardom wishes that the archbishop of Mesembria should stay away from the monastery of Eleusa, that is, he is to have no rights in it and is not to interfere in the monastery or infringe upon anything that was written by my tsardom, or to try [doing] something; only the name of the high priest⁴⁴¹ is to be included in the holy memorials. Month of April, ninth *indiction*.

II. Charter for the monastery of St Nicholas on the promontory of Emona.

... And as the most blessed and famous Tsar Ioan Asen [II], grandfather of my tsardom, left many memories on earth and, in the first place, his most Orthodox and most imperial piety, as well as many other virtues, it was desired by the divine power of my tsardom to grant a liberating and divine golden bull to the monastery of the holy miracle-maker and chrism-producer Nicholas at Emona.

For that reason [my tsardom] personally granted gold from the treasury of my tsardom for the production and issuing of the liberating and divine golden bull. When the current high monk Makarius came to bow before my tsardom he made it known to my tsardom that the above mentioned monastery of St Nicholas has been built from the foundations by the most blessed Sevina,⁴⁴² grandmother of my tsardom. When my tsardom heard that the said monastery had been established for the remembrance of my [grand]parents, my tsardom was filled with joy. Because of that my tsardom gave to the said monastery this liberating and sacred golden bull of my tsardom, in the person of the high monk Makarius, father of and supplicant for my tsardom, so that he governs as a father and a mentor, and resides in this monastery as he wishes and prefers, without obstacles and in complete peace together with the monks living there. Through this liberating and divine golden bull of the divine power of my tsardom it commands that this monastery of the holy chrism-producer and miracle-maker Nicholas is to be left in peace, without being harmed, touched, or bothered by any demand of the tsar, the church, or the magnates.

And if some of the residing there metropolitans, at any time, dares to break, hassle, hinder, or abuse in any way the current divine and liberating golden bull of the divine power of my tsardom and the

⁴⁴¹ I.e., the archbishop.

⁴⁴² Most likely Irene; identification by Ivan Bozhilov.

remembrance of my tsardom even for an *obol*,⁴⁴³ may he bring on himself the curses of the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nicaea and may his fate be equal to that of the traitor Judas. That is why this liberating and divine golden bull of the divine power of my tsardom was composed and was given to the most dignified monastery of the holy chrisim-producer and miracle-maker Nicholas, for the guarantee and safeguarding of any possible demands in the month of August, on the fourth day, in the year 6903 [1354], seventh *indiction*, on which our pious and God-crowned power signed it.

III. Charter for the monastery Eleusa.

The most holy metropolitan and *hipertimos* of Mesembria brought out before my tsardom the rights of his most holy metropoly on the grounds of which, before the fortress of Mesembria passed in possession of the Bulgarian tsars, he ruled over the monasteries in its diocese, namely over the [monastery] honored with the name of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ and called Acropolitae, as well as that of the most pure Lady and Mother of God called Agnosotirisa, and that of the holy and sacred martyr Basil. However, in the monastery honored in the name of our most pure Lady and Mother of God Eleusa, at the instigation of a former sponsor, the archbishop was only mentioned. These monasteries, after the city passed under Bulgarian rule, were taken from the said most holy metropoly and were given to another. From that point until now it has been deprived of them. [The metropolitan] pleaded with my tsardom about them and my tsardom, accepting his plea, desires and orders with the current decree that this most holy metropolitan and *hipertimos* of Mesembria takes and rules over these monasteries and exercises over them the [power] that was exercised by the archbishops of the most holy metropoly subjected to him before the said city of Mesembria fell under the tsar of the Bulgarians, as it was mentioned, to the extent of the well-grounded rights acknowledged to him. Let there be no intrusion, therefore, on the part of the oecumenical patriarch [in Constantinople] nor on the part of any one else, on the grounds of the custom and divisions of that time and now. For this reason the current decree of my tsardom was issued, on the [thirtieth day of the month of September, third *indiction*].

⁴⁴³ The lowest denomination copper coin.

Charter of Tsar Ioan Shishman (1371–1395) to the monastery of St John of Rila, September 21, 1378. 231

As the cult of St John of Rila spread, its foundation grew to become one of the largest in the country. Of its donation charters, however, only the golden bull of Ioan Shishman survives intact, except for the golden seal, which was either lost or stolen, or cut off deliberately to validate a forgery. The charter, although its authenticity has been disputed, bears every sign of genuineness. The number of the state burdens from which the people and the properties of the monastery were freed is staggering and indicates the increasingly ailing economy of later medieval Bulgaria. Editions: *BSM*, 597–600; Ivan Dujchev, *Rilskata gramota na tsar Ivan Shishman ot 1378 godina* (Sofia, 1986).

It is something pious and very pleasant and praiseworthy for all Christ-loving tsars to love and have a warm affection for the holy and divine churches in which the images of the Man God and His saints are painted. For the tsar is adorned with a crown, with precious stones and pearls, but even more so with piety and faith in God and reverence for His holy churches.

Because of this my tsardom, which holds by God's anointment and [according to] the apostolic tradition the throne of the resting in peace blessed tsars, and because of [its] pious Christianity and warm love for God and reverence for His holy churches and His divine images, and all of His saints, and even more so for the renewal, remembrance, and alms on behalf of the now resting in peace blessed tsars who first sat on the Bulgarian throne, for all that, my tsardom, having learned of these law and tradition, my tsardom grants this godly and al-comprising golden bull of my tsardom to the monastery of my tsardom of the holy Father John of Rila, which is in the place called Rila with pleasure, for all of its villages, and properties, and possessions, and rights, that is, old and new.

These are the villages of the holy Father John of Rila: the villages Varvara, Chrtov Dol, Krchino, Bdino, Driska and Gagan, which is a mountain; Orlitsa, monastery's property, to Brzhdim and the height of Brzhdim, the height Lohotnitsa and down from Lohotnitsa in Rila and across Rila in the mountain of Mareshnitsa, from there to Buduritsa, from there to Kamenitsa, from there down to Rila, and up Rila to Brzhdim. Apart from that, those on the right side of Tsarev Vir, to the church of the Mother of God, to St Prokopius, to the two rocks, and down from Rila to Varvara, then St Elijah's, then Gabrovets, and along the bank to St George, to St Archangel, then to Driska and to the fortress, then up again above Tsarev Vir: all those fields and vineyards belong to the monastery. Besides that, Lomnitsa with Krushevitsa and

Armenitsa and the fields above the villages of Pstra in Rila are too in the monastery's domain. Also, the village of Bazovo, the village of Debr, Ablanovo, Pstra, the village of Gnidobradsko, and the priests of Razlog; the village of Leshko, the village of Selishte, the village of Drenov Dol, the settlement of Tserovo, the village of Dolene, Gradechnitsa with the people, namely, the priest Theodore with his children and his kin, and Peter Theodosov with his brothers and all the rights of that place. Also, the middle mountain, from where Rila springs up, to Zlana, to Lepshor, and the river of Iliina to its confluence with Rila, and from Lepshor to the peak of Komarevo, then to Kamen peak, then to Tsarev peak, then to Shipochen, to the monastery's property and to the right side of the town of Stob in Rila and down Rila to Struma and across Struma to Germanshtitsa, and across Germanshtitsa to Balgarino, and from Balgarino to Pesi Preskok, to the huts at Agupov, and to Shaak, to the Fish Lake, to Prekupovitsa, and again to the mountain of Rila. Over all these lands the desert-dweller John of Rila is to have inalienable power at the display of this golden bull of my tsardom.

To this more is added: where there are villages or hay fields, or mills, or places [suitable] for mills, or fishing places, or vineyards, or fields, and any kind of properties, which belong to these villages and these people that are under the power of this monastery of my tsardom, over all of them the monastery of St John of Rila is to have immutable power.

With a clear and honest deliverance my tsardom frees and releases all the people and all the villages of this monastery of my tsardom so that no one dares to disturb them, be they *sevasts*, *practors*, *primikures*⁴⁴⁴ and *alagators*⁴⁴⁵ or judges, or *perperaki*,⁴⁴⁶ or grain collectors, or wine collectors, or one-tenth tax collectors of honey, pigs, and sheep, or *apodohatori*, or *comisi*, or *stratori*,⁴⁴⁷ or *senari*,⁴⁴⁸ or *mitati*,⁴⁴⁹ or *kraguyari*, or *kutchkari*,⁴⁵⁰ or *gradari*, or *varnichi*,⁴⁵¹ or *pobirchiü*,⁴⁵² or *nahodnizi*.⁴⁵³ Neither

⁴⁴⁴ Leader, the term is used in various contexts, here perhaps leader of a military detachment.

⁴⁴⁵ Commander of a cavalry detachment.

⁴⁴⁶ Collectors of tax in cash.

⁴⁴⁷ Junior military commander.

⁴⁴⁸ Collectors of the hay tax.

⁴⁴⁹ Service tax, obligation to provide lodging, food, and transportation for officials on royal business.

⁴⁵⁰ Dog-breeders or masters of the royal kennels.

⁴⁵¹ Collectors of tax on building material.

⁴⁵² Generic term for tax collector, perhaps the same as *practor*.

⁴⁵³ Royal messengers.

is any one among all of the *bolijars* and *rabotniki* of my tsardom, great and small, who are being sent at any time to all the provinces of my tsardom [to collect] all kinds of taxes and demand services to my tsardom, to trouble the people of the holy Father, nor their fields in the plain and in the mountains, nor are they to take a man to work, nor their *rabotniki*, nor their *zevgari* are to be taken for corvée, nor horses or cattle. To this the following as well: none of these should dare to forcefully enter the villages and [abuse] the people of this monastery of my tsardom of the holy Father, and take forcefully bread or kill a bird, and are not to even set foot in their yards, but they all should be chased away and stay away at the display of this golden bull of my tsardom. Also, the town of Stob should have power neither over the monastery's people nor over their property: not even over a hair. To this, the following as well: if some one of the monastery's people opts to travel with merchandise of his own around the country within the power of my tsardom, let him be free to buy and sell without anyone preventing him at the display of this golden bull of my tsardom, and he should not be charged *kumerk*,⁴⁵⁴ or *diavato*,⁴⁵⁵ or something else. To this the following as well: if in the region of the monastery *aeriko*⁴⁵⁶ is collected then this monastery of my tsardom of the holy Father should duly take it and no one else should have the power to collect this *aeriko*. Thus, this monastery of my tsardom in the name St John the Desert-dweller with all of its properties, as we listed them above should be free and untroubled by anyone for as long as the sun shines on earth and for as long as my tsardom lives.

As my tsardom saw the ordered beauty and pure liberty of this monastery of my tsardom and all of its properties [granted by] the great-grandfathers, grandfathers, and parents of my tsardom, the now resting in peace blessed Tsar Asen and Tsar Kaliman, and all Bulgarian tsars, great-grandfathers, grandfathers, and parents of my tsardom, and as my tsardom saw this liberty, I gave to this monastery of my tsardom this virtuous and all-encompassing golden bull at the time when the people of this monastery came to the province of my tsardom in Sredec, so that no one can force them [and not touch] even a hair of theirs, but they shall be free on the order of my tsardom in all rights

⁴⁵⁴ Customs or commerce fee.

⁴⁵⁵ Bridge-crossing fee.

⁴⁵⁶ Most likely court fee, also *ricos* and *tvariko*.

and properties, that is, old and new, and with all of their properties they shall live free and untroubled by anything.

However, even after the death of my tsardom, whoever the Lord God, the Eternal Tsar, wills to place on the throne of my tsardom, be it the most beloved son of my tsardom, or [some] of the brothers and relatives of my tsardom, he should have no thoughts of taking away something or interfering with or trampling upon this gift of my tsardom, but should renew it and, moreover, confirm and add to it, as it is good for the Orthodox tsars to do. And if any one of them attempts to mess with or abolish this golden bull of my tsardom and takes something away from what was written down here and begins to harass the people of the desert-dweller John of Rila, that person the Lord God will try before His righteous tribunal, and let him be an accomplice of the Lord's traitor Judas, to inherit the leprosy of Gnesius, and have the holy Father [John] as an enemy here and in the future century. Amen.

For that reason my tsardom granted this virtuous and all-encompassing golden bull to this monastery of my tsardom, for open conformation and pure liberty. Written and signed by my tsardom with the customary tsar's signature in the year 6887 [1378], second *indiction*, in month of September, day twenty-one.

+ Ioan Shishman in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians and Greeks +

232 *Charter of Tsar Ioan Shishman to the monastery of the Mother of God in Dragalevtsi, between 1371 and 1382/1385.*

The only indication of the date of this charter is the fall of Sofia to the Ottomans, which occurred either in 1382 or in 1385; after that Ioan Shishman was not in a position to issue grants to foundations in the region. Edition: Ivanov, *BSM*, 600–601.

My tsardom willed with pleasure to grant this virtuous and all-encompassing golden bull of my tsardom to the monastery of the most pure Mother of God, which is in the mountain of Vitosha and which was built, created, and adorned by the parent of my tsardom, the now resting in blessed peace Tsar Ioan Alexander.

Therefore, my tsardom liberates this monastery of my tsardom together with all of the monastery's possessions and properties, so that the *kephalia* of Sredets would not trouble this monastery, its properties, or the people of the monastery from the village of Novacheni, which

reside in the city of my tsardom Sofia; over these people neither the former *kephalia*, nor his *practors*, *kastrophilacts*,⁴⁵⁷ one-tenth tax collectors, *primikurs*, *alagators*, nor, furthermore, the *perpiraki* of my tsardom or the *zhitari*,⁴⁵⁸ nor *winari*,⁴⁵⁹ nor one-tenth tax collectors of honey, pigs, and sheep, nor *apodochators*, nor *comites*, nor *strators*, nor *serdars*,⁴⁶⁰ nor cooks [should] dare have any power, nor [is a beast to be taken] for *podvod*, or *padaliste*,⁴⁶¹ nor [should] *kraguyari*, or *kuchkari*, or hay collectors [enter into it], and neither *fun* [should be taken] nor fines, nor should St Sophia have power over the people of the most pure Mother of God, neither [should] *galadstvo*⁴⁶² [be collected], nor *raspust*, and no power should dare disturb the people of the most pure Mother of God of Vitosha, but all such should be driven away at the display of this golden bull of my tsardom. Solely Roman, the abbot of the most pure Mother of God, solely he [is to govern], and no one else should attempt to trouble these people or [even] a hair [of theirs]. If anyone attempts to harm them even in a hair, may he be cursed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the most pure Mother of God, and the twelve apostles, and the three hundred and eighteen holy and God-bearing Fathers of Nicaea, and may he be an accomplice of Judas and Arius, and be deprived of the body and blood of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ and be with those who said “His blood is on us and our children,” for ever. Amen.

+ Ioan Shishman in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of all Bulgarians and Greeks +

Charter of Tsar Ioan Sratsimir (1371–1397) to the merchants of Brashov, last quarter of the fourteenth century. 233

Ioan Sratsimir established himself in Vidin in the late 1340s when he was still the heir-apparent. After Ioan Alexander's second marriage, the death of his brothers Asen and Michael, and the clear indications that he would not inherit in Tarnov, he proceeded to transform his apanage into an independent state in a lockstep with Alexander's gradual elevation of his son from Theodora, Ioan Shishman. With the ascension of Shishman the separation was completed. Bordering on Hungary and Vlachia (Sratsimir was half-Vlachian

⁴⁵⁷ Fortress commanders.

⁴⁵⁸ Grain tax collectors.

⁴⁵⁹ Wine tax collectors.

⁴⁶⁰ Low-ranking officials with court or police functions.

⁴⁶¹ Collection with unclear meaning.

⁴⁶² Judicial fine with unclear meaning.

himself), and being a vassal of both Hungarians and Ottomans, Sratsimir oriented the economic policy of his domain toward the north and northwest, of which this short privilege to the commercial city of Brashov is a good example. Edition: *BSM*, 602.

From the Lord Tsar Sratsimir to *zhupan* Jacob, Herman Fohnoga, Peter Fingali, and all the citizens. What you wrote and asked for, that your people travel freely, God is my witness, let the people of the lord king in the city of the lord king [of Hungary] come freely as they wish and trade whatever they wish. I am giving my pledge as tsar and I take them, on my soul, under my protection, and they shall not be harmed nor will a hair of theirs be, as you see for yourselves. Also, those who bring letters from you will be honored and beloved of my tsardom.

Ioan Sratsimir, tsar of the Bulgarians.

Notary Records

- 234 *Notary record for the sale of a slave from Nesebar, 1350.*

Edition: Ivan Sakazov, *Stopanskite vrazki na Balgaria s chuzbina prez XIV vek*, 58, n. 3.

On the same day [September 10, 1350]. I, Jacob of Nesebar, resident of Constantinople, make it known that I and my heirs give, sell, and transfer to you, Giacomo Vasalo, resident of Crete now residing in Constantinople, and your heirs a slave of mine by the name of Moalba, of Tatar descent.

- 235 *Notary records of Bulgarians contracting to work in Crete, last quarter of the fourteenth century.*

The Ottomans' steady progress in southeastern Europe triggered a Bulgarian diaspora in the region and the Eastern Mediterranean. As refugees, mercenaries, slaves, traders, sailors, and assorted immigrants, many Bulgarians left records documenting their adaptation to their host societies. These two extracts from the books of the Cretan notary Antonio Bresciano are typical of the relatively large communities of Bulgarians in Crete and Cyprus. Edition: Sakazov, *Stopanskite vrazki*, 76, n. 2 and 77, n. 1.

On the second day [of October 1374]. I, Nikola Petrov from Varna, Bulgarian, with my heirs, make it known to you, Alexius Papuka, resident of the village of Agiomiros, and to your heirs, that I take the obligation to you and your millers to work, and take care, and do whatever else millers do like a milling stone in your mill, conscientiously and without

abuse, from this moment to the coming sixth month included. You are to give me and pay me as my wages and remuneration for my labor thirteen and one half *gros* every month. And if something happens etc., there will be a fine of five *perpera*. In the presence of witnesses: Marco Dokortsi, Tomas, . . . and Giacomo Valiso. Filled and handed.

On the same day [of October 2, 1374]. I, Iani of Plovdiv, Bulgarian, with my heirs, make it known to you, the below signed Alexius Papuka and your heirs, that I am joining your plowmen and I take the obligation to till your land with oxen and sow, and do everything else that plowmen do, conscientiously and without abuse, from this moment to the completion of the sowing season. You have to give me and pay me as my remuneration or wages for my labor seventeen *gros* every month and provide for my maintenance. Present witnesses: Marco Drusto and Marco Dokortsi, and Iani Katso.

Scribal and Marginal Notes

Note of the scribe of the Hilendar Gospel of Tsar George Terter II, 1322.

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The note documents the desire of Tsar George Terter II to enrich his personal library with works by the best scribes available, in this case a work of a member of the monastic community of the Serbian foundation of Hilendar on Mount Athos. The tsar, who died young and possibly by an outbreak of the plague that swept over the Balkans ahead of the Black Death, most likely did not live to see his copy of the Gospels. Edition: *BSM*, 264–6.

What belongs to the Son is and above all fittingly belongs to God. Through God tsars reign and rulers rule and they complete and accomplish feats and fulfill humble desires and deeds, fearing His will and carrying it out.

The heart of the great Tsar George [Terter II], son of the great Tsar Theodore Svetoslav, holder of the Bulgarian and the Greek scepter, diligently willed, and I copied these four Gospels on his tsardom's order, for the glory, praise, and honor of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and his tsardom, and for the abolition and forgiveness of sins in the year 6830 [1322], fifth *indiction*.

This book belongs to the faithful in Chirst [Tsar] George.

Note of the scribe of the Gospels of Anchialo, modern Pomorie, 1337.

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The self-deprecating attitude of this scribe does not prevent him from making sure that his name remained known to his sponsors, God, and posterity,

documenting in the process the expansion of Bulgarian power along the Black Sea coast under Ioan Alexander in the 1330s. The note hints to the uneasiness of the local clergy who had to change their allegiances along with the political changes and documents the parcelling of Bulgaria into apanages given to members of the ruling family, in this case the minor and short-lived son of the tsar, Ioan Asen V. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 281.

See the sweetest end of this book, completed by the grace of the ruler of all, the divine and humane Word, by my lazy hand, by me, the bearer of sacrifices, the sinful and negligent monk Methodius Gemist, completely illiterate, in the year 6845 [1337], fifth indiction, on the twenty-first of May. The one who owns this God-speaking book of the four Gospel-writers and holy saviors is called Ioan, bearer of sacrifices⁴⁶³ and first among the bearers of sacrifices of the town of Anchialo, elevated to this official rank by the great Patriarch Theodosius of Tarnov in the reign of the most pious and sovereign lord of the Bulgarians Tsar Ioan Alexander and his son, the most pious Tsar Ioan Asen [V].

238 *Marginal note of scribe Stanislav, Minei, 1342.*

The note documents another of the works of the scribe Stanislav, whose prolific production marks the monastery of Lesnovo as a major center of literary activity in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. This time his sponsor was Despot Ioan Oliver, a magnate and a Serbian royal official of mixed Serbian, Bulgarian, and Byzantine parentage who ruled his apanage in the Bulgarian southwest all but independently under the Serbian King Stephen Dushan and sought to promote the power of the Serbian establishment in Mount Athos, Hilendar, over the previously independent Bulgarian foundations in his domain. Not by coincidence, Stanislav chose to date the completion of his work “in the reign of Christ.” Edition: *BSM*, 162–3.

Glory to the Creator God in all ages, amen! By the will of the Father and the assistance of the Son and the intervention of the Holy Spirit this book was began and completed in the years and days of the most high and holy-born King Stephen [Dushan] when the entire province of Ovche Polje was under the rule of the great *voevoda* Oliver, in the district of Zletovo, in the place called Lesnovo, in the monastery of the great *voevoda* of the higher powers, the *archstrategos* Michael, by the grave of the blessed father Gabriel. This monastery was [re]built from the foundations and finished by the great *voevoda* Oliver who [had it] painted and adorned with all beautiful things, with vessels of gold and silver,

⁴⁶³ I.e., a high cleric or bishop.

[and had its] large icons encased in gold and silver for it is meet that the house of God is beautified. [He] granted it villages and properties, grazing fields, meadows, and forests, and with royal grace confirmed all boundaries; he [had] a gold-sealed charter written down and gave it⁴⁶⁴ to the [monastery] of the holy Mother of God of Hilendar in the Holy Mount with all of its properties. This book was written in the reign of our Lord God Christ, under the abbot Theodosius, in the second year after the completion of the temple of the *archstrategos* Michael on the order of the lord great *voevoda* Oliver, by the hand of the very sinful Stanislav. I beg you, lords and fathers, and church officials of all ranks, sing, read, and correct. And if I happened to make a mistake in a word, forgive me and do not curse, because no Christian desires to sin, but sins come uninvited. Have mercy on me so that God forgives you in this age and in the future one. God have mercy on the great *voevoda* Oliver. God have mercy on his lady Anna. God have mercy on the abbot Theodosius and all of the brothers. God have mercy on all clergy serving this temple honorably. God have mercy on the entire Christian world and on myself. Have mercy.

Marginal note of the scribe Besarion, Paterik, 1345–6.
Edition: *SBK* 2, 128–9.

239

Most merciful and over generous Lord, who said “Seek and you shall find and you will receive; knock and it will be opened to you.” So I, my Lord, the sinful and unworthy servant of Yours, remembering the truthful promise of your love for humankind [because You] Lord said that You do not desire the death of the sinner but that he comes back and lives. Because of that, fortifying my weak body, I wrote this writing with my rough and transient hand. And if I blundered in my reading or in [copying] a chapter or, I say, in anything else, or in my thoughts, let all be pleasing to your love of humanity, my Lord. And every one who reads, correct the roughness. Do not curse, but remember what Christ said about us: “If you forgive the sins of men, my heavenly Father will forgive yours.” We all have to die as mortal men and the beauty of the world will remain, for we were born naked and naked we will go back to the earth for of it we were born. As the apostle Paul said, the human glory is like grass. The grass dries and its flowers fall out, but the word persists from generation to generation. Do not be lazy,

⁴⁶⁴ Not the charter but the foundation of Lesnovo.

fathers and brothers, but remember me as well, the sinful and the poor one, and the lowest of all the monks. Do not curse but bless the name of Besarion, to whom death will be the remembrance, sins his wealth, and the grave his fatherland. + This book called *Paterik* was written in the Laura of the incorporeal first commander Michael under the archimandrite Lord Nicodem and under the Christ-loving and noble Tsar Ioan Alexander who holds the Bulgarian and the Greek tsardom, in the year 6854 [1345–1346], fourteenth *indiction*.

240 *Marginal note of the scribe Laurentius, miscellaneous collection, 1347–8.*

The note is the only evidence for the date of the death of Ioan Alexander's first wife, the Vlach princess Theodora. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 134–5.

In the year 6856 [1347–1348], first *indiction*, this soul-nourishing book was written down for the faithful, Christ-loving, and most high autocrat and tsar of Bulgarians and Greeks, Ioan Alexander, for his [long] life and health, and for the strengthening of his tsardom and his children and for the benefit of any Christian who reads with faith and love. For the divine books are like sources of clear water: every one who approaches them with diligence gets his fill himself of living water, which leads to eternal life. Because of that you, who read and peruse [them] give what is due—that is, praise and prayer for the said faithful tsar—so that you receive the reward of the One who fulfills the prayers of those who pray and blesses the years of the righteous. Amen. + Work and suffering of the most sinful pseudomonk Laurentius.

241 *Note of the scribe of the Parenesis of Lesnovo, 1353.*

The note illustrates the continuous literary tradition in Lesnovo and the strong ties with Bulgaria even in the conditions of overlapping jurisdictions and conflicting sovereignties in the mid-fourteenth century Balkans. Edition: *BSM*, 163–4.

This book called *Ephrem*⁴⁶⁵ was written by the will of the Father and with the help of the Son and the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the land of Zletovo, in the place called Lesnovo, in the foundation of the holy archstrategos Michael, in the time of the faithful and Christ-loving Bulgarian Tsar Ioan Alexander, the faithful, Christ-loving, and holy tsar of the Serbian and Greek lands Stephen [Dushan], the great Despot Ioan Oliver, donor of this temple, and the most sanctified high priest

⁴⁶⁵ Collection of the works of the monastic father Ephrem Syrin.

of this land, Lord Arsenius, who ordered that I, the wretched pseudo-monk, write this book. So, fathers, brothers, and true novices, do not revenge yourselves with curses but utter a good word for me because I am as mortal as you and eternal sufferings are in store for me as they are for you before God our Savior. I am not a scribe, but my Lord Bishop Arsenius ordered and I wrote the book in the year 6861 [1353], sixth *indiction*. God have mercy in the future age! Amen.

Note of Simeon, scribe, to the London Gospels of Tsar Ioan Alexander, 1355–6. 242
The note documents the elevation of Ioan Shishman, now with the semi-official title of “most-beloved son” to the position of heir-apparent at the expense of his half-brother Sratsimir, the son of Ioan Alexander by his former wife, the Vlach princess Theodora. This change of policy, possibly under the influence of the newly-converted Jewish wife of Alexander opened a rift between father and son and led to the secession of the apanage of Vidin and the creation of three “Bulgarias” as the knight Hans Schiltberger, a participant in the ill-fated Crusade of Nicopolis in 1396, put it. Edition: Dimitrova, *The Gospel of Ivan Alexander* (London, 1994).

Glory to God who is exalted in the Trinity and who fulfills all good endeavors commenced in His name and offers the beginning and the end. This life-giving source of the new grace of the most sweet teaching of Christ and his divine testimonies, disciples and apostles is called the Four-fold Witnesses of Good News not only because of its external colors and gold [leaf] and woven linen, or because it is adorned with [precious] stones and pearls, but because of its inner pouring out of the divine Word and the fulfillment of the mysterious prescience demonstrated in God’s divine incarnation and the miracles he performed for us, as well as because of His mercy and compassion even to the cross and the burial and the glorious resurrection on the third day and the ascension. But who can count and account for the deeds of Christ narrated in it? For it is truly like a water spring in an arid and parched land and whoever drinks from it never gets thirsty again. It sends forth streams that gladden the soul, it makes the heart and the mind rejoice; it is like a treasure hidden in the settlement of the heart. Having sought it, the faithful, Christ-loving, most high, and God-crowned autocrat Tsar Ioan Alexander found it like a candlestick that had been left in a dark place and forgotten there, consigned to obscurity by the ancient tsars. This Christ-loving Tsar Ioan Alexander discovered it with divine desire and having brought it to light [had it] translated from the Greek language into our Slavic speech and displayed it for all to see. It was encased in gold-plated covers and inside it was adorned artfully by

painters with life-giving images of God and his glorious disciples painted with bright colors and gold. All this was done for the strengthening of his tsardom. Just like the great among the saints Tsar Constantine together with his mother Elena dug up from the bowels of the earth the life-giving cross of God so he [i.e., Ioan Alexander] did with this four-fold bearer of good news. Then he held the scepter of the Bulgarian and the Greek tsardoms together with his faithful, God-crowned, and newly-enlightened lady Tsarina Theodora who has the same name as the gift of God, and with his natural and most-beloved son Tsar Ioan Shishman. For the glory of the Creator of all and the bearers of His good news Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Ioan, with whose prayers may God grant him victories over his enemies who wage wars against him and [grant him] to crush their heads under his feet. Amen. In the year 6864 [1355–1356], ninth *indiction*. + The one who wrote this book is called monk Simeon, servant of my lord the tsar.

- 243 *Scribal note in Bdiniski Sbornik, a miscellaneous collection of female saints' Lives, 1359–60.*

In the newly-proclaimed tsardom of Vidin, Ioan Sratsimir and his court displayed the indispensable mark of sovereignty: smaller-scale, but still significant sponsorship of literary production. This collection of female saints' *Lives* was made for his wife, Tsarina Anna, and is the first indication of Sratsimir's assumption of sovereignty as a reaction to his younger brother's elevation to the position of heir-apparent. Sratsimir's title mimics that of his father and brother, both with little correspondence to the political reality of the time. Editions: *SBK*, 2, 154; *Bdiniski Zbornik. An Old-Slavonic Menologium of Women Saints (Ghent University Library MS 408, AD 1360)*. Edited and annotated by J. L. Scharpe and F. Vyncke. With an Introduction by E. Voordekens (Bruges, 1973).

By the will of the Father and the endeavor of the Son and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the days of the faithful and most high autocrat and tsar of Bulgarians and Greeks, Ioan Sratsimir, the faithful and holy-born Tsarina Anna endeavored and ordered that this book was written on her command, called a gathering of the holy blessed and martyred women. May they fortify the tsardom of the lord tsar, his tsarina, and their children, and [bring them] health for their bodies and salvation for their souls. It was written in the city of Vidin in the year 6868 [1359–1360]. Glory to our God for ever, amen.

- 244 *Scribal note in Lestvitsa, a miscellaneous collection from 1363–4.*

By 1363 Tsarina Theodora had been Christian for more than fifteen years, but the scribe—and no doubt the Orthodox public opinion—had not forgotten her Jewish parentage. Edition: *SBK*, 2, 155.

In the year 6872 [1363–1364], second *indiction*, this book was written with these three earthly fingers by the lowest of the monks Theodosius, in the place called Ustie, by the city of Tarnov, and under the faithful Tsar Ioan Alexander and his tsarina, the newly-enlightened Theodora. I beg you fathers and brothers, read and correct, and do not curse.

Scribal note in the Sinai Oktoih (the five books of Moses, Jesus Navine, Judges, and Ruth), second half of the fourteenth century.

245

This marginal note bears perhaps the best witness to the Bulgarian literati's program of new translations from the Greek that began in the second quarter of the fourteenth century and extended well into the early fifteenth century. Father Ioan's accomplishment is exceptional, but his work is symptomatic of the period. The movement was sparkled by the realization of the many errors and corruptions that have crept into the scriptural, dogmatic, and liturgical writings in use in medieval Bulgaria since the restoration of the official literary tradition in the late twelfth century. The process of correction and improvement, which touched virtually every literary genre, peaked under Patriarch Euthymius, but its completion was cut short by the Ottoman conquest. Edition: *BSM*, 275.

End of the New *Oktoih* of God. Labors and travails of our blessed father Ioan, who translated this from the Greek into our Bulgarian language. He chose [to settle in] the Laura of our God-bearing father Athanasius in the Holy Mount of Athos and with love and desire and with the grace of the Holy Spirit translated and wrote the following books: the four Gospels, the Apostle, the Liturgy, the Typicon, the Psalter, the Theotokar,⁴⁶⁶ the Minei, the Agirist, the Damascene, the Lestvitsa, Isaac Syrin, Barlaam, Dorotei, Paterik, the Pandekts of Antioch, and many other [books] he composed and bequeathed to the divine and holy churches in the Bulgarian land. It was as if he adorned them with vessels becoming to a tsar! Those of the monks and the laymen who imitated his diligence adorned themselves spiritually as well with the saint-like images of children of the church. For this, eternal memory to father Ioan, the other author, who is now as famous as his namesake,⁴⁶⁷ and to Ioan, Joseph, Theophan, and Kosmas. Through their prayers, instruct us in the way of penance and have mercy on us oh Lord, like the good lover of humankind that Thou are. Through the prayers of the most pure Mother of God and all saints, amen. Because of all this

⁴⁶⁶ A collection dedicated to Virgin Mary.

⁴⁶⁷ John Damascene.

I, the sinful and poor [in spirit] and the lowest of the lowest, unworthy to be called with the monastic name Methodius and a hieromonk to boot, labored on the sweet works of the elder. I copied several books: seven Psalters, five Books of Hours, four Liturgies, three Lestvitsas, and many others. The last one I copied was this *Oktoih* of the sweet Agirist and completed it to the end. It contains all the services from the [feast of the] Resurrection, fifty [in number], and the everyday and nightly singings, as well as all the penances and the sweet evangelic songs and good news, eleven [altogether], and the funeral liturgy of the bearer of the chrim.⁴⁶⁸ I beg you all—be you brothers and monks, or Christ-loving laymen, if this book reaches you and you use it or copy it—give my week mind its due and do not curse all the time. This is how you will receive your reward from the Lord God who fulfills the prayers of those who pray and blesses the years of the righteous. Remember: none of us himans is perfect, only God is. Glory to him in all ages, amen!

Varia

- 246 *Constantine of Kostenets, Journey to Palestine, early fifteenth century.*
 Besides his *Life* of Stephen Lazarevic and a grammatical treatise, which continue the tradition of pre-conquest Bulgarian literature, Constantine of Kostenets translated several works from the Greek. The short treatise translated here is in the genre of arm-chair travelers' accounts and illustrates the range of interests to which Bulgarian literary production catered. Edition: Ivan Dujchev and Tsvetan Kristanov, *Estestvoznaniето v srednovekovna Balgaria. Sbornik ot istoricheski izvori* (Sofia, 1954), 245–51.

Fragment One:

Let us narrate about this journey, which I found written down in Palestinian Caisareia.

From Edem to Drahma [there are] seventy journeys along the river Physon.

From Drahma to Ebilat [there are] seventy journeys. There is no [special] time for sowing and harvesting there; there is always sowing and harvesting. [They hold their] properties in common and say that they are the truest Christians.

From Ebilat to Emir [there are] forty journeys.

From Emir to Ebneka [there are] thirty [journeys].

⁴⁶⁸ St Nicholas.

From Ebneka to Disman [there are] two [journeys and the territory is] contiguous. This territory is watered by the Physon. Among [its people] there are no idols nor do they believe in Christ, nor in the Law of Moses but they only say that God in Heaven should be worshipped. For them the law is not to tell lies.

From Disman to Honea the journey is eight months. They are all Christians. There are there arid places [stretching up to] twenty-four months of travel. Very often they travel overseas from Diabrod to Great India; it takes seven journeys. The Christians [there] are more numerous than the pagans.

From India to Alexiomen [one sails] in seven months.

From Alexiomen one reaches Little India across the Red Sea in five months.

From India one sails to Persia in three months.

From Persia to Saracinia [there are] two journeys.

From Saracinia one sails across the Red Sea to Ebilat [putting in] Persian and Indian harbors and in Egypt; it takes nine journeys.

From Elamia to Antioch there are [lacuna] journeys.

From Antioch to Tsarigrad there are thirty-two journeys.

From Tsarigrad to Rome there are eighty-six journeys.

From Rome to Gaul there are twenty-seven [journeys].

All together there are eleven hundred and twenty-five journeys. There are sixty miles in a journey, one hundred *sagens* in a *stadium*, and five hundred and eighty *sagens* in a mile; thus, there are seven and a half *stadiums* in a mile.

Fragment Two:

Description of Palestine

...before the Ascension. From Eleon to the place where the sacrifice of Abraham is said to have taken place on the mountain...The same can be found at Eleon. However, from [the place of] the Ascension where the step of Christ is on the stone [from which] He ascended, for Eleon is called [the land] from the Cedar stream all the way to Bythinia and the rest, there are...From the City [of Jerusalem] to the Vale of Sorrows there are four hundred and fifty [feet]. From there to the field of the potterly maker, one hundred and eight. From the sanctuary to the place where He healed the blind, six hundred and ninety. From there to the Upper Siloam, three hundred and eight. In the house of Zaccariah there is a church fifty feet in length. John [the Baptist] was born there. In Betleehem, in the cave where the milk was done,

twenty-five. The door is very narrow; one can barely squeeze through it. The church at the tomb of the Lord is one hundred and fifty feet long. From there to the finding of the cross there are in fact seventy two feet. The width of the cave is fifteen feet. Around the tomb, from all four sides, to the pillars at the navel of the earth there are seventeen [feet]. From the navel of the earth to the door, eighteen. From the door to the place where they divided the clothes of Christ, eighteen. From the tomb to there place where they took Him down, fifty [feet]. From there to Golgotha, twenty-five [feet]. Around Jerusalem and Betlechem there are no mountains, but the place is adorned with heights and is somehow marvelous. Eleon is the tallest of all of them. The tomb of Chirst looks eastwards, and in Getsimania the tomb of the Mother of God looks to the south, according to the custom back then. On the eastern side of the Holy Table there are three steps. From there to the tomb of the most holy Mother of God, nineteen [feet].

- 247 *Constantine of Kostenets, Clarification on the Alphabet, early fifteenth century, excerpts.*
Edition: Dujchev, *Estestvozannieto v srednovekovna Balgaria*, 245–51.

... The reasons for the corruption of everything, which have to be removed by correct instruction. About the corruption of all the things we mentioned and of the ones we have not yet talked about, and even more so of the heresies, of which there will be word later, it is necessary to know that only mature [persons] can educate the youth, explaining to them everything correctly from the beginning. Let no one mocks me here because writing was corrupted not by mature [people], but because of instruction by lazy and evil [teachers]. For this reason it has to be cured from what corrupted it. If someone, even though advanced in years, possesses youthful cheerfulness and the mind of a mature man, through these means he will speedily obliterate the roots of destruction, even more so if he follows the commandments of the divine scripture: “As you proceed on the path of perfection.” For if they see that the youth comprehends Scripture better than mature men, even if they do not wish to, out of shame they will seek the [correct] way.

However, even if what will be declared [next] will [cause] grief, for as long as it is useful, we will explain it in the beginning. If someone wants to teach as they did long time ago, as it is said, “After A comes B, etc.,” according to the names [of the letters] to which children are used, let him teach! He will not corrupt anything this way. He only

needs to pronounce every letter correctly, as well as according to their length and accent as we explained, so everyone remembers them as they are taught. However, I pity the kids, for they begin [to build] an edifice which many have failed to erect. If we go by the names of the letters, we force every single child to build it in that way. For that reason even those who study by the Psalter need interpretation. Every small piece, taught by someone who employs this manner of teaching, quickly piles up into a big heap. When they reach to the fifth or the sixth level, even before they tackle the Hours, they will be accustomed to study without needing interpretation, and write by themselves. It is an easy way for both those who teaches and those who are taught.

The following is about the letters. In what way will they be understood best? First, if you wish so, write the letters together with their numerical value, so that is is clear, which are the Greek, and which were invented. The numbers go by the Greek letters except “six” because among the numbers only it is Serbian.⁴⁶⁹ Something else: right at the beginning you need to get them used to both literary pronunciations. Even if some of them begin with the Greek pronunciation, later they will quickly get accustomed to both. Pronunciation goes like this: A, B, Γ, and not: A, Γ, because in Greek it is said, “Az,” “Vede.” It is so, and even though some misinterpret the instructions of the canon about the alphabet and say: “This canon is according to az-buki” or “The acatists and icoses, which it contains are according to “az-vede,” when we begin we too have to write in this way so that we are strong in all subjects. Besides, what teaching requires that we [write] “A, Γ?” But even if we write it this way, when you teach, regardless of the great effort, you will make no mistake, if you stick to what was said above. As for the effort, let me repeat: if those who teach children put in so much effort, there have to be many who are able to interpret the books, of course, using etymology. However, the learned are very few; most of them talk about their journeys. Let no one think, however, that even this is easy, as some like to say and add a lot of other nonsense as well. Let him understand that even among all those things considered unimportant nothing happens without order and without the decree of the [holy] Fathers.

⁴⁶⁹ I.e., Slavic. Constantine wrote the treatise while in Serbia and for the instruction of Serbian children.

When one begins to write, the first sign of all to be written is the cross: this is what the [Fathers] commanded. Do not think that this is without a good reason. It is because in the beginning, through the baptism we were crucified and buried together with Christ. By the same token, those who begin to study the divine letters should put the cross in the beginning, saying: “Cross help!” according to the command of the apostle: “[Lord prevent] me from boasting except in the Lord’s cross!” So, before everything else, they should put the cross and say “Cross, Lord, help!” They worship it and it is a divine sign in Heaven even though not a deity. Do not ask who [does it]. This is what only the ignoramuses ask, not everyone. See how much evil springs out of ignorance!

“+ **Ѧ, Б, Г, Д, Ё, С, З, И, Ѡ, Л, К, А, М, Н, Ё, О, П, Р, С, Т, ѠѠ, Ѧ, Х, Ѡ, Ш, Ю, Ѡ, Ѧ, Б, Ж, К, Ъ, Ш, Ѡ, Ѡ, Ч**”

When they have learned them like this from the beginning, then let them go backwards, “**Ч, Ѡ, Ѡ, Ш**” and all the way back to “**Ѧ**” and the “+.” To learn them in their order it is not necessary to write them; it is enough to pronounce them. In this way he will remember every letter according to its place. If he learns only forward, he will have problems remembering them because he will imagine them only in the order he learned them. Besides, many letters do not appear very often, such as **Ѡ**, or **Ѡ**, or **Ё**, and others. And when they forget them, this is a great headache for the teacher, for he has to work more with the children to teach them something small and used sporadically. If someone abandons this manner of instruction even for a short time, he will have problems when he resumes it. And if he completely stops using it, he will find himself in a desolate and impenetrable area, following the broad road to perdition as the Lord marked it. It is indeed so: those who are lazy in the beginning lead their pupils into desolate and impenetrable areas and let them perish one after another and [wish that] they, like the offended and the oppressed, enter the Kingdom of the Lord. Similarly, those who do not teach the pupil to put the diacritical signs above the letters, lead him to [desolate and impenetrable] areas.

Why is it that among these people there are almost no philosophers⁴⁷⁰ as it used to be at first, except someone here and there, who studied in foreign lands or came from abroad? Are foreign nations wiser than this

⁴⁷⁰ Constantine means grammar teachers.

one? Not at all! Disobedience and the destruction of [correct] instruction in the letters cut off the paths to [correct writing!]

Apocrypha

The Sibyl Oracle.

248

The prototype of the thirteenth-century Bulgarian versions of this genre of historical reflection masked as popular prophecies is most likely the Byzantine Greek text of the so-called *Tiburine Sibyl*, dating from before the ninth century, see P. J. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbeck. The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Washington, DC, 1967). The Bulgarian author modified significantly his Greek original and introduced several comments and interpretations casting the Bulgarians in a positive light. The *Sibyl* is a good example of the Bulgarian self-consciousness in the thirteenth century, in the time when the Mongol invasions sent the national fortunes in a downward spiral. Its most important contribution is the rendition of the Greek-Biblical chronological “generations” in the providential unfolding of world history as “nations,” ranked according to the set of national characteristics with which each of them was endowed. The Bulgarians, of course, topped the list. Edition: Anisava Miltenova, “Skazanie za Sivila. Arheografski belezhki, tekstologicheskoto prouchvane, izdanie na teksta,” *Palaeobulgarica/Starobulgaristika*, 4 (1984), 44–72.

King David,⁴⁷¹ the prophet of God, had a great lust in himself. His power poured out as he sat, and because of that they used to put a pot underneath him and his power drained in the vessel. Once, one of his servants wiped the vessel with grass and threw it away. A goose snatched the grass and ate it up. Then it laid an egg, and from that egg a female child with goose legs hatched. This was secretly conveyed to King David. King David figured out what had happened and said: “Take her to the land of Ugar.” They called her Maria⁴⁷² for she was very pretty and wise, more than anything else in the world. That is why she was called Sibyl,⁴⁷³ [which means] “wiser than kings.”

She conquered the entire land of Ugar,⁴⁷⁴ and reigned in Rome. She prophesied about Christ, as the Lord told David: “I will put someone from your loins on your throne,” for she understood all the prophecies. She very much hoped that Christ will be born of her and kept her

⁴⁷¹ King David (ca. 1004–965 BC), see 1 Kings 17–30; 2 Kings 1–24.

⁴⁷² Maria was a common name in Aramaic, with the meaning of “lady” or “mistress.”

⁴⁷³ The name is most likely of Iranian provenance and its meaning is unclear.

⁴⁷⁴ Ugar most likely comes from the Slavic *ugar*, fallow or uncultivated, uncivilized land, populated by mythological beings.

virginity intact until one hundred judges had the same dream. Then the Sibyl realized that what she had hoped for would not come to pass.

The judges told her: “Mistress, we will confess to you the dream we all had, explain it to us.” The Sibyl told them: “Tell me what you saw, and I will figure it out from your words.” The hundred judges responded thus: “Mistress, on that day we saw such a dream: we saw nine suns, shining upon the world.” The Sibyl asked them: “Tell me what were the nine suns you saw like?” The hundred judges told her: “The first sun had many rays and shone quietly, spreading light to the world. The second sun was as beautiful as a lightning and had fire in itself. The third sun was blood-colored and went dark three times, like a very unusual blaze. The fourth sun was blood-colored as well; it was very strong and in its middle a tsar’s throne appeared. The fifth sun glowed in a red-blue hue and sent out thundering fear. The sixth sun shone like the snow and was a pleasure to behold. The seventh sun was in the color of warm blood and was scary to look at. The eighth sun was clouded and there was a hand in its middle that covered the world. The ninth sun was the most terrifying of them all: all black with a blue halo around it.”

The Sibyl told them: “The nine suns are nine nations.⁴⁷⁵ The first nation is the Slavs, that is, the Bulgarians. They are good-humored, hospitable and humble, and they like foreigners and Christianity. They will present to God the true faith, in which they are superior to the entire world.”⁴⁷⁶

“The second nation is the Georgians. They like foreigners and are meek, do not harbor hatred, are kind, respect priests, and inquire about God.”

“The third sun is the Hellenes, that is, the Greeks. They change their tsars, mix with all people, like to brag, bear false witness, are proud and avaricious, and offer bribes in court. Three times will they waver in their faith and will present the tsardom to God, but they love the Church.”

“The fourth sun is the Jews, chosen by God for many feats. A woman will appear of the Jewish nation, called Mary Mother of God, and will give birth to a son, and they will give him the name of Jesus. He will

⁴⁷⁵ The text has *rod*, with the direct meaning of “clan” or “lineage.”

⁴⁷⁶ The *Legend of Thessaloniki* and the *Razumnik-Ukaz* stake the same claim; the three works might have borrowed from a common perception about the superiority of the Bulgarians in matters of religion.

destroy the Jewish faith and will strengthen the true law and will reign for all ages from East to West. The heavens will open for him and his word will rule the earth. A voice will come from Heaven and angelic troops, six-winged cherubs, will carry his throne and will worship him, falling at his feet. Twelve men will come out of Galilee and will establish his law. He will call them from Heaven and will tell them: “What you did receive from me, convey it to all of the seventy-two nations.” Then the Jewish high priests said to the Sibyl: “Stop, Mistress, stop, we asked about something else!” The Sibyl said: “What do you mean? We have heard from the Scriptures that God will appear on earth!” They said: “Do you believe, Mistress that this will come to pass?” The Queen told them: “Don’t you believe in it?” And the Jews said: “Truly, we do not believe it. How will it come to pass—[God] coming down on earth, born of a virgin—really, it will not happen so.” Then the Sibyl told them: “Woe to you, my people, for this law will do no good to you! I am telling you: God will come down on earth and will be in the same time a true father and a real baby. And kings will rise against him, and will wish to kill him. These kings will perish and many other things will happen because of him.” And they said: “Oh Sibyl, you are saying the truth. His feats on earth will be great. Because of him children will be murdered together with their mothers and rivers of blood will run. These kings will melt like ice, and those who believe in him will remain alive. They will give him poison to drink and will hang him on a tree. Only after that will they hear about the many miracles he will work on earth. Then the holy three will appear, on it they will crucify Christ. The entire universe will worship that three.” The Jews said: “Mistress, tell us from where will the three come.” The Sibyl replied: “This is the three because of which Adam was driven from Paradise. Then all the people will gather together and will crucify him and it will work great miracles. It will satisfy the thirst of many. Woe to those who do not believe in him!”

“The fifth nation is the Franks. Three kings⁴⁷⁷ will set off and will perform many great deeds in the name of God and [will wage] many wars. There will be a Sun City⁴⁷⁸ and universal temples and [they] will leave their inheritance to the brave.”

⁴⁷⁷ The Greek text identifies the three kings with the Seleukid Antioch I (281–261 BC) and the Roman Emperors Tiberius (14–37) and Caligulla (37–41).

⁴⁷⁸ After the Greek Heliopolis or Baalbek, a city on the ancient Phoenician coast.

“The sixth nation is the Syrians. Two kings⁴⁷⁹ will rise among them, and will cause much trouble to the people throughout their realms.⁴⁸⁰ The princes will gather together here and will bring them to court and will kill their soldiers and will cut them down in the name of Jesus Christ. After that a tsar of two nations will appear, by the name of Constantine.⁴⁸¹ He will come out of Rome and will be God’s chosen soldier. He will destroy the churches of the infidels and will humble the Hellenes. He will offer a great sacrifice to God and a sign will appear in the sky for him. His mother, the glorious Elena, will come out and will find the cross, on which Christ the son of the living God was crucified.⁴⁸² He will build a great city, the New Jerusalem, as fortress of the Greeks, resting place of saints, and adornment of tsars. They will call it Constantinople.”⁴⁸³

“The seventh nation is the Arcadians.⁴⁸⁴ They will build Rome as a gathering place and Rome will be great again. [They] will shed blood among the Franks.”

“The eighth nation is the barbarians, that is, the Saracens.⁴⁸⁵ A tsar will appear by the name of Leo, the father of Cyril the Philosopher. In these days earthquakes will occur and there will be famine in the cities and provinces, and great battles, and many will perish. The bitch-wife of this tsar will give birth to a son whom they will call Leo-Constantine.⁴⁸⁶ [He] will destroy Syria and will lay siege to Jerusalem. This woman will live fifty years and the Saracens will rule over Jerusalem for three hundred years.”⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁷⁹ Not identified by name in the Greek text; perhaps the emperors Decius (249–251) and Valerian (253–260), both of Syrian provenance.

⁴⁸⁰ Allusion to the persecutions of Christians under Emperor Decius.

⁴⁸¹ Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337), who ruled over the eastern and western portions of the declining Roman Empire.

⁴⁸² The story about Elena, Emperor Constantine’s mother (247–327) and the finding of the true cross was widespread in the Middle Ages; the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals* have the same story. Elena was canonized and her feast day is celebrated on May 21.

⁴⁸³ Constantinople, officially inaugurated as the new capital of Rome in 330, is always called Tsarigrad in Bulgarian texts.

⁴⁸⁴ The Greek text identifies the seventh generation with the name of Emperor Arcadius (395–408).

⁴⁸⁵ Usually identified with the Arabs in the Near and the Middle East.

⁴⁸⁶ The text confuses the *strategos* Leo, father of Cyril the Philosopher, with the iconoclastic Emperors Leo III Isaurian (717–741), Constantine V Copronimus (741–775), and Leo IV (775–780).

⁴⁸⁷ The Arabs took Jerusalem in 639 AD. It was retaken by the Byzantines in 868 AD and then fell again under Arab rule until the coming of the Crusaders in 1099, to be lost again to Salah al-Din in 1187.

“The ninth sun is the Tartars.⁴⁸⁸ In that time years, days, and hours will turn backwards. Warriors will rise from the East and will shake up cities and provinces, and bloody cries will rise because of them. Wherever they wage war, blood will run like water. They will be destroyed by a man with the angelic name of Michael.”⁴⁸⁹

Vision of the Prophet Daniel *from the Holy Scriptures*.

This version of Prophet Daniel’s *Vision* is based on a Byzantine Greek redaction from the twelfth century with original Bulgarian interpretations interwoven into the text translated from the Greek. The author might have worked under the fresh impression of the Fourth Crusade and the fall of Constantinople (here referred to as Babylon) to the Latins, as well as the setbacks the Latins suffered at the hands of the Bulgarian tsars Kaloyan and Ioan Asen II. Unlike the eleventh-century *Vision of Daniel*, the information offered in the text is quite cryptic. Only one copy of this text is extant, in the so-called compilation of the priest Dragol, dating from the third quarter of the thirteenth century. Edition: Pavel Sreckovic, “Zbornik popa Dragolja. Sadržina i proroshstva,” *Spomenik srpske kraljevske akademije* 5 (1890), 12; edition of the Byzantine Greek archetype: Vasilij Istrin, *Otkrovenie Mefodija Patarskogo*, (St Petersburg, 1901), 135–9.

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Oh, woe to you, Babylon of the Seven Hills!⁴⁹⁰ When you hold back the angelic self-rule and when you count the way: for sovereignty is like a serpent, which hisses against the murderous lion.⁴⁹¹ The blond nation⁴⁹² will be masters over you, the One of the Seven Hills, following on their way and the smooth roads. His tsardom did not know the Latins; Tsarigrad will belong to Rome and Rome will belong to Tsarigrad.⁴⁹³ They will hold sway over three eastern and four western peoples in the Hellenic provinces. Their rulers over the eastern people will defeat

⁴⁸⁸ The Mongols; the name comes from the Greek “tartar,” which means “Hell.”

⁴⁸⁹ The legend of the Emperor-Savior Michael reflects the restoration of icons worship under Emperor Michael III (842–867), see A. Vasiliev, “The Emperor Michael III in Apocryphal Literature,” *Byzantina and Metabyzantina*, 1 (1946), 237–48. If the work was written in the middle of the thirteenth century it might well have meant the Bulgarian Tsar Michael II Asen (1246–1256).

⁴⁹⁰ The reference is to Constantinople, the New Rome, confusing it with the Old Rome of “Seven Hills.”

⁴⁹¹ The lion is traditionally seen as symbol of the Franks; later it indicated Western (Latin Catholic) knights.

⁴⁹² Again, reference to Latin Catholics or Franks, although it might have been related to the ninth-century Vikings and their attacks on Constantinople. The *Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals* from the eleventh century use it to identify the Scandinavian mercenaries in service of the Byzantines who participated in the suppression of the uprising led by Peter Delian in the 1040s.

⁴⁹³ The conquest of Constantinople by the knights of the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

Ishmael⁴⁹⁴ to the ninth generation and will shake up the peoples who live in the north and have never eaten bread, only meat and stock. They will rise in four hordes and will turn their faces toward the West and the One of the Seven Hills with great wrath. They will reach a great river and will not go alongside it but will stop. The foremost [among them] will winter in Ephesus, the next in Maginia, the third [part] in Damalia, and the fourth [part] at the river delta and along the shore known as Iphagam.⁴⁹⁵ They will gather much wood and will build a bridge. [Then] they will fall upon the One of the Seven Hills. They will divide in seven parts. The people in the western and the southern periphery will rise and a great forest will grow. The people of Baldwin⁴⁹⁶ will defeat seventeen enemy armies and everyone will defeat the other. There will be a great battle the like of which has not been seen. Thousand seven times seven honest souls will fall, none of them commoners. All of the flesh of Sodom will be cut down. Rivers of blood will run in the city and the squares of the One of the Seven Hills and the sea will get dark with human blood. Then the ox will cry and the bull will howl and a voice will come from Heaven that will say: "This vengeance will overcome you. I avenge myself because of those who did not listen and did not keep my commandments." An angel of God will come down from Heaven and will bless the confines of the One of the Seven Hills and will say: "Peace upon you." Then the number thirty of the law, anointed by God, will appear. Amen.

Behold the old woman with the bag; she collects wheat and straw with barley. Now the wheat will be taken [eaten?] by locusts; oats mixed with [in?] three bloody vessels, torn up by the roots and laid upon a shield. Straw multiplies, bulbs are excavated, and the twentieth nation presents itself in the place called Pendakeonin.⁴⁹⁷ A ship will appear promptly, the throne of the Lord waits; the people with the shaved beards flee. The Golden Gates are flung open; the Gates of St Roman are open, as do those of St Nicholas Krotopholis.⁴⁹⁸ Harvest came for joy and the sheaves are ready for burning, the shields are ready for

⁴⁹⁴ Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar (Genesis 16:11–16, 21, 10–13), stands in all Bulgarian texts for Muslims and occasionally pagan invaders such as Khazars, Petchenegs, Uzi, Coumanians, and Mongols.

⁴⁹⁵ Pergamum.

⁴⁹⁶ Baldwin of Flanders, the first Latin Emperor of Constantinople (1204–1205).

⁴⁹⁷ A triumphal monument erected in Constantinople by Emperor Theophilos (829–842).

⁴⁹⁸ Respectively, Constantinople's southwestern, central, and northeastern gates.

clashing.⁴⁹⁹ Musicians will proclaim the Lord's time to the four corners of the world.⁵⁰⁰ Guard yourself against temptation!⁵⁰¹ Stand still earth, do not shake! God comes, dragging much wood; he will burn it all. Go away and do not come back! Maria drags the threshing cart in Tsarigrad, turned upside down. Tsar Abron⁵⁰² had his horse shoed anew and digs everything in the vineyards. Blessed is the one who has a cave, for he will be saved!⁵⁰³

Vision of the Prophet Isaiah of the last times.

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The *Vision* is in the vein of the group of texts loosely modelled upon the early Christian apocryphal work *Ascension of Isaiah* to which the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals* of the eleventh century belongs as well. Like the former, the *Vision* offers a commentary upon the recent past of southeastern Europe, refracted through a curious mindset that blends prophecy, legend, and history. More specific historical clues in the *Vision* allow us to place it in the time of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, between 1204 and 1261. Edition: P. Sreckovic, *Žbornik popa Dragolja. Sadržina i proroshstva*, SSKA, 5 (1890), 15–16.

[Here is] what will happen to humankind of the last generation. Listen, I am Isaiah, chosen of God and selected to be a prophet by the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵⁰⁴ An angel of God came and carried me high up above earth and I saw the chaos down there; he lifted me up even higher and there I saw an angel sitting and singing. I asked the angel that led me: “Lord, what kind of singing is this?” The angel told me: “Work hard, Isaiah, and you will see the glory of the Lord, which is even greater than that.” And he lifted me up to the fourth and the fifth heaven and there I heard angelic singing and my spirit rejoiced. My bones shook, and I told the angel who led me: “Lord, hurry up, and bring me as soon as possible before my Lord, who called me in the womb of my mother to tell me His secrets.” And he lifted me up to the seventh heaven. There I saw a judge sitting on a throne. A river of fire run around [him], countless multitudes obeyed him, and thousands of thousands served him. On his right side I saw angelic singing and on his left side [I heard] the cries and moans of sinners. I said to the

⁴⁹⁹ Revelations 14:15–16.

⁵⁰⁰ Revelations 12:7–9.

⁵⁰¹ Matthew 24:4, Luke 21:8, Mark 13:5.

⁵⁰² The meaning of the name cannot be ascertained.

⁵⁰³ After Revelations 6:15.

⁵⁰⁴ Isaiah lived at least seven centuries before Christ. He was born some time in the eighth century BC and he died as a martyr in the reign of the king of Judea Manasias (687–642 BC).

angel: "Show me the Lord who called me." But the angel told me: "It is impossible to see your Lord. You will only hear His voice and what He has to tell you." Then I heard a voice that told me: "Go, Isaiah, and tell [everyone] what will happen to the last generation." I said: "Lord, I feel good here, do not send me back to where I came from." Then the angel said to me: "Isaiah, how will the dwellers of the earth know when the end will come, the sign? After you there will be no other prophet to explain that."

Here I come [therefore], by God's will, to reveal to you what will happen to the last generation: remember me, when you look toward the New Jerusalem, called the City of Constantine.⁵⁰⁵ Because in that city the last two tsars will reign, and after that there will no longer be a tsar. In the place called Romania⁵⁰⁶ they will destroy all of their magnates with their cruelty; and this will stink up Romania. The southern Queen called Anna will be of that generation. She will be called *odiva*,⁵⁰⁷ or "the one who destroys." Oh miracle, if only these two tsars knew that, they would not have given their *odiva* to the dragon. But so it has been written! Because it has been written: From the North, a goat kid will lie with a linx, and the linx will wisper in its ear, saying: "Get up, and strive without shame for the golden throne and the silver palace where there is a priceless pearl!" Because it is written: when the lion begins to graze with the lamb and the bear begins to munch together with the ox, when the Gospels are preached to child-eaters and blood-suckers! Oh miracle, if only the two tsars of Jerusalem knew, they would have made peace with the Westerners and would have opposed the shameless dragon. But it is been ordained to happen this way; it is not I who speaks but the Holy Spirit. The dragon will get up and will get his notables and will sit in a wooden boat. They will come to the river, which is called the hidden Paradise. This river goes through the land of Israel and the one called Moesia,⁵⁰⁸ because there will blossom the scepter of Jesse's root.⁵⁰⁹ Truly, I will tell you what will happen in the

⁵⁰⁵ The identification of Constantinople with Jerusalem became more common after the Great Schism between the Latin Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches.

⁵⁰⁶ "Romania" was a traditional appellation for the Byzantine Empire, especially its western provinces.

⁵⁰⁷ *Odiva* means "married daughter."

⁵⁰⁸ Moesia is the traditional Byzantine appellation of Bulgaria; it is possible that the Greek prototype had "Moses's land" here.

⁵⁰⁹ That is, Jesus, who comes from the lineage of Jesse, the father of King David, 1 Kings 17:22.

last times. It is not I who speaks: the Holy Spirit speaks. The dragon will get out of the wooden boat and will sit on a feathery seat.⁵¹⁰ He will settle at the place called Ovche Polje,⁵¹¹ and will vanquish all the peoples around. There will be great battles and they will cut themselves like grasses in the field; the well will overflow with their blood. Oh, marvelous miracle! If only the western tsar knew, he would not have fought at the dragon's side. For it has been written: the cub will not graze with the lion!⁵¹²

Here, behold the sign that not I but the Holy Spirit gives you! When you see the end of the tsardom in the land of Moesia there will be no more tsars of that lineage. However, two princes will rise: one from the East, the other from the West. The Westerner will reign with wrath, and the Easterner with peace. [The latter?] will gather those who had been scattered the same way the hen gathers the chicks under her wings. In his years the notables will be like princes and the poor like officials. They will live their years, as many as they have, without grief. Then, the shameless gradon will rise from Ovche Polje and [surround] them from all sides. He will lead them with reveling, just like a groom who leads his friends to marriage, and will tell them: "Come with me to the marriage to see my glory!" Because it has been written: "Let [him] come to the end of the earth and behold Solomon's wisdom." Then [he] will come to the New Jerusalem, called the City of Constantine, and when he knocks the gates will be opened for him; and he will get to the place called Tabor.⁵¹³ Then two men will come out of the divine wisdom, which is called "St Sophia." The one with the archangelic name Michael⁵¹⁴ and with the crown will look at him wrathfully. Then they will get terrified, and will be totally confused, and will cut each other down like grass in the fields so that the sea will overflow with the blood of all the lands. Oh marvelous miracle! There will be grief at that time, such grief that has not been since the beginning of this world or will ever be! Blessed is the man who will escape that bitter hour, that is, that bloodshed. For it has been written: the dragon will

⁵¹⁰ The text has *pernatitsa*.

⁵¹¹ In the vicinity of Skoplje in modern Macedonia.

⁵¹² Possible allusion to the Bulgarian-Byzantine wars of the late twelfth century.

⁵¹³ The place of Christ's transfiguration.

⁵¹⁴ Reference to the legend of Michael the Last Emperor with possible allusion to Michael VIII Palaeologos (1261–1282).

fall on that field called *Adrino Pole* and it will be called *Gigovo Pole* and will no longer be known as *Adrino Pole*.⁵¹⁵

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, there is much lawlessness in you, and much blood will be shed in revenge because of you! Then what has been said will come to pass, the birds of the sky will come to drink the blood of men and the beasts of the earth will feast on their corpses for the blood of the righteous will be avenged. Then Michael will say to the people who are still alive: "You see now that I am the prince of all nations. Go home and live in peace, and I will give you knives for weapons." Then all peoples will live in peace. The vine that shriveled will perk up and the arable fields will overgrow with wheat. Then an old woman will set out, supporting herself on a scepter; as she goes, she will come across naked human bones. She will gaze at them and wail and will only say this: "Beloved children, why did you kill each other; if you lived, the human fruit on earth would not have dwindled!"

Then the New Jerusalem will live with that weapon instead of with wood for seven years. After that, Michael will live in the New Jerusalem for as long as he has been commanded. In the days of his years the enemy of God will be born in a monastery. He will be raised in the monastery and will be more handsome than many people and will deceive with friendship. He will do anything to please Prince Michael, and will mature in his reign. And when the end of his days comes Prince Michael will go to the cross and will bow down to it. He will lay down his crown on the cross and will yield up the ghost to God. Then the enemy of God will sit on his throne instead of him and will begin to torment people and work miracles in their eyes. He will torture those who believe in God. Truly, he will know those who are on [the right] side and will torture the Christians, asking them: "Where are those who believe in the Christian books?" And he will throw the Christians in the thorny bushes, and will wrap their intestines around oaks. Then the faithful will raise their voices to God, and the Lord God will hear them, just like the mother hears the cry of her children and quickly rushes to them. Just so the heavenly Father will hear the voices of his faithful, who will cry out laud. He will send them His only Son with the angels, and He will bind the devil with unbreakable chains. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Blessed are those who will die Orthodox! Glory to our Lord for all ages, amen.

⁵¹⁵ That is, the field of Adrianopolis.

Pandech's prophetic tale.

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Pandech hailed from the Bulgarian southwest and composed his tale around the middle of the thirteenth century, most likely in the late 1250s. His vivid interest in the contemporary politics of the region and especially the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Byzantine affairs, is only thinly veiled by the conventions of the “prophecy” genre. The Emperors John IV Laskaris (1258–1261) and Michael VIII Palaeologos (1261–1282), the Bulgarian Tsar Michael II Asen (1246–1256) and the short-reigned contender Micho Asen (1257) are mentioned, as well as the Serbian military successes against Byzantium in the late 1250s. The text is extant in only one copy. Another, later version was destroyed during World War II. Edition: P. Sreckovic, *Zbornik popa Dragolja. Sadržina i proroshstva*, SSKA, 5 (1890), 14–15.

Rome is mature. Maturity is its fall and its fall is its destruction.

There is a city called Byzantion.⁵¹⁶ Constantine of Rome⁵¹⁷ came and conquered Byzantion. He ravaged it and destroyed it and built a city and called it, as his own creation, Constantinople. In it the Byzantines reigned until the Lord Tsar Manuel⁵¹⁸ and after that they will not reign until the Day of Wrath comes in due time.⁵¹⁹

Jerusalem, the holy city, will not last long. It will perish before all other cities and will cease to exist.⁵²⁰

Drach⁵²¹ belongs to the snakes; it is the snakes' place. This city will not survive the burning of the snakes to ashes even if the martyr Sauros⁵²² prays on its behalf; woe to it and woe again, famine and famine again.

Damascus and Baber will shrink together; their people will become sensitive and humble.

Babylon, the meeting point of people, will long and grieve, for pity and shame will afflict it.

Idumea is a barbarian nation; it will neither survive nor exist.

Egypt: the desert burns. [It] will be widowed and will burn up.

Iberia, Palinia, Zaharia, Ugadania, Calabria: all those countries will be turned to ashes by fire and will perish; India will be united and will become famous.

⁵¹⁶ The ancient Greek colony where Constantine built his new capital.

⁵¹⁷ Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337).

⁵¹⁸ Emperor Manuel I Comnenos (1143–1180).

⁵¹⁹ Indication that the text has been composed during the reign of the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204–1261).

⁵²⁰ Crusader-held Jerusalem fell to the Egyptian Sultan Salah al-Din in 1187.

⁵²¹ Durrachium.

⁵²² Isauros was martyred in the late fourth century.

Tarta is a great river on the opposite side of the same city; that is why it was given the name Tarta, that is, why the Haldeian people are called Tartars.⁵²³ Two swords will pass a second time over the earth, for they have to pass two times with anger over the earth.

The Coumans will not make it anywhere and will perish.⁵²⁴

The Russians will howl like wolves and will be scatered; cruel death will reach them and they will melt like wax in the face of fire.⁵²⁵

Adrianopolis will perish from hunger and will be overcome with grief.⁵²⁶

The Hungarians will not last long.⁵²⁷

The Serb[s] is small in numbers. He will be called again. First, he will make his peace with the Great Tsar. Then, he will rise in arms against him. He will vanquish him like Jesus [vanquished] Amalek and the Gavaonites. His name will be famous among those who live around him.⁵²⁸

The Bulgarian is young and while two fight it out, the third one will become foremost; youth is change of the dynasty.⁵²⁹

Thessaloniki will be swamped with lust and will be afflicted by the grief of the last days.⁵³⁰

John—Joaniza—will be humiliated, that is, in the Indian way.⁵³¹

⁵²³ Attempt to explain the popular name of the Mongols.

⁵²⁴ The Coumans were routed and dispersed by the Mongols in the 1220s and 1230s.

⁵²⁵ The Russian principalities were crushed by the Mongols and after the fall of Kiev in 1241 accepted Mongol overlordship.

⁵²⁶ Probably a reference to the devastation of the city's environs during the Bulgarian-Byzantine war of 1254–1255.

⁵²⁷ Allusion to the Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241–1242.

⁵²⁸ Reference to the Serbian operations against Byzantium (Nicaea) in the late 1250s.

⁵²⁹ After the death of Ioan Asen II in 1241 his minor son Kaliman I Asen took over (1241–1246). In 1246 he was murdered and Michael II Asen (1246–1256), another minor son of Asen II became tsar. In 1256 he was murdered in his turn and his young cousin Kaliman II, who struggled to remain in power, faced off another pretender who was also crowned as tsar, Asen II's son-in-law Mitcho Asen. Both failed to hold onto power and in 1257 the leading *bolijari* invited Constantine Tich Asen (1257–1277) to take the crown.

⁵³⁰ Possibly a reference to the licentious rule of Despot Demetrios Angelos Comnenos (1244–1246) in Thessaloniki and the handing of the city over to John Ducas Vatatzes by the disgruntled citizens.

⁵³¹ Most likely the young John IV Laskaris (1258–1261) who was deposed by Michael Palaeologos.

Miho and Michael is not Michael; his son Michael will rise somewhat; then he will rise again.⁵³²

Razumnik-Ukaz.

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The *Razumnik-Ukaz* is one of the most popular collections in the genre of the Bulgarian apocalyptic literature. Like most of the other works in this vein it is a compilation and adaptation of Byzantine Greek texts with additions of original and strongly patriotic and anti-Byzantine Bulgarian material. Opinions differ on its date; it could have been composed any time between the end of the twelfth and the middle of the fourteenth century. It is extant in more than twenty Bulgarian, Serbian, Vlachian, Moldavian, and Russian copies, dating from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Edition: Benyo Tzonev, *Opis na rakisite v narodnata biblioteka Kiril i Metodij*, vol. 1 (Sofia, 1924), 225; Anisava Miltenova, “Razumnik-Ukaz. Tekstologichno prouchvane. Izdanie na teksta,” *Palaeobulgarica/Starobalgaristika*, 4 (1986), 20–44.

With God begins this *Razumnik*, guide to all of the sermons of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On the 17th day of the month of March God resurrected his guest Lazar.⁵³³ In the month of March, on the 18th day, [He] established Palm Sunday.⁵³⁴ On the 19th day [He] healed the menstruating woman.⁵³⁵ On the 20th day [He] established Easter and then called one of His disciples and told him: “Go to the village before me and and you will come across a man who carries a clay vessel full with water. There I will celebrate Easter with my disciples.”⁵³⁶ On March 21st the Lord transformed Himself.⁵³⁷ On March 22nd He held the Last Supper.⁵³⁸ On March 23rd the Lord was crucified.⁵³⁹ On March 24th our God Jesus Christ was buried. On March 25th Christ rose from the tomb.⁵⁴⁰ Christ lived on earth thirty three years and four months. During the month of May, on the third day, in the sixth hour, Christ ascended to Heaven.⁵⁴¹

⁵³² Micho Asen was proclaimed tsar in 1257 after Michael Asen was murdered; the name Micho is a folk rendering of Michael and that necessitated the clarification.

⁵³³ John 11:1–44.

⁵³⁴ John 12:12–13.

⁵³⁵ Matthew 9:20–22.

⁵³⁶ Luke 22:10.

⁵³⁷ Matthew 17:1–13.

⁵³⁸ Luke 22.

⁵³⁹ Matthew 26, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18.

⁵⁴⁰ Luke 24.

⁵⁴¹ Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50–51, Acts 1:2–3, 9–12.

Question: How many years the Mother of God had until Gabriel's Annunciation? Answer: Fourteen years and five months.

Question: How many years did the Mother of God spend in the house of John the Theologian after the Ascension of the Lord? Answer: Fourteen years and eight months. The holy Mother of God lived in all fifty-nine years.

Know this, brothers: there are three tsardoms in the world, just as there is a Holy Trinity in Heaven. The first tsardom is the Greek; the second tsardom is the Bulgarian; the third tsardom is the Georgian. The Father is with the Greek tsardom, the Son with the Georgians, and the Holy Spirit is with the Bulgarian tsardom. The Greeks will hand over to God the tsardom, the Bulgarians, Christianity, and as for the Georgians, they too, will hand over Christianity [to God].

In the place of the twelve apostles there are twelve horns established on royal thrones. St Peter's place is the Frankish throne; St Paul's, the Greek throne; the place of St Luke's is the Armenian throne; the place of St Matthew, the Hisyan throne; the place of St Mark, the throne of Cyprus; the place of St John, the Serbian throne; the place of St Andrew, the Arcadian throne; the place of St Thomas, the Nicaean throne; the place of St Bartholomew, the Czech throne; the place of St Jacob, the German throne; the place of St Philip, the Despot's throne from which tsars are derived.

Question: Explain to me, how do peoples differ from one another?

Answer: The Frank is a lion; the German is an eagle; the Saracen is a wild boar; the Turk is a snake; the Armenian is a lizard; the Indian, a dove; the Syrian, a fish; the Georgian is a ram; the Mongol, an Agarene dog; the Couman, a leopard; the Russian is an otter; the Lithuanian, a bison; the man from Dubrovnik is a bear; the Greek is a fox; the Bulgarian is a bull; the Vlachian is a cat; the Serbian is a wolf; the Hungarian, a linx; the German, a zubr;⁵⁴² the Czech, a squirrel; the Alan, a deer; the Saxon, a shepherd's horse; the Pole, a mink; the Jew, a badger; the Albanian, a beaver; the Egyptian, a he-goat; the Hun is a rabbit; the Arcadian is a half-goat, half-deer; the Tzakonian is a mole; the Sakulian⁵⁴³ is a buffalo; the Persian, a heron; and the Croatian, an aspid.

⁵⁴² Repetition here: the author has already mentioned the Germans as *Alamani*.

⁵⁴³ The Sikuli, an ethnic group in Hungary.

All these peoples have twelve books between themselves. The Orthodox [peoples] are three: the Greeks, the Bulgarians, and the Georgians. The half-orthodox are the Frankish, the Alemanian, the Hungarian, the Czech, and the Armenian. The infidel books are four: the Jewish, the Saracen, the Turkish, and the Luthuanian. There are seventy-two peoples altogether and half of them have a law.

Question: Explain to me, how did the Orthodox peoples arise? Answer: Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Jafeth. When Noah cursed Ham, his brothers forsook him and said: “Our offspring should not touch Ham’s offspring because their progeny will be cursed; let us all take from our offspring.”⁵⁴⁴ Shem had eight sons and eight daughters. He blessed them and died. Shem’s sons said: “We will not touch our sisters, for it is because of lawlessness that the flood happened and the world perished.” They built two houses: the brothers dwelled in one of them and the sisters in the other. They got together only to take their meals. And so they lived for fifteen years. God saw their patience and sent them one of His angels; and they began to beget by sight. From them stem the five Orthodox peoples: the Syrians, the Georgians, the Greeks, the Bulgarians, and the Russians. From Japhet stem the twelve semi-Orthodox peoples: the Franks and the Latins, the Hungarians, the Armenians, the Arcadians, the Czechs, the Poles, the Germans, the Croatians, the Albanians, the Sakulians, and the Hisyans.

Question: Where did the infidel peoples come from? Answer: From Ishmael and from Hagar, his mother. Ishmael was Abraham’s child out of wedlock. He lay with his mother in Sinai. His mother told him: “Men should take many wives to be victorious like the children of Abraham.” From Ham stem the Egyptians and the Pharaohs. And because Ham was cursed, his progeny was cursed as well; God drowned them in the Red Sea. Glory to our God for all ages! Amen.

Popular Culture and Belief

Kolednik, Gramnik, Trepetnik, and Mesetsoslov: *a miscellaneous collection of popular divination works.*

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The genre of popular divination is pagan by origin and was widespread in Byzantium but it was not until the late Middle Ages before a properly Bulgarian textual tradition developed on the basis of late-Byzantine versions. The

⁵⁴⁴ The curse of Noah, Genesis 9:20–27.

exant texts are preserved in fourteenth- to seventeenth-century Bulgarian copies and Russian redactions, which keep the linguistic traces of their Bulgarian prototypes. Editions: Konstantin Arhangelskij, “K istorii juznoslavjanskoj i drevnerusskoj apokrificheskoj literaturaj. Dva ljubopitnijh sbornika Sofijskoji narodnoj biboteki v Bolgarii” *Izvestija Otdela Russkogo Jazika i Slovesnosti* 4 (St Petersburg, 1899), 131, 132–3, 137–42, 145; Nikita Tikhonravov, *Pamjatniki otrečnoj russkoj literaturji*, 2 (Moscow, 1863), 360–66; Dujchev and Kristanov, *Estestvoznanieto v srednovekovna Balgaria*, 401–13.

Kolednik [Christmas Book]

If the birth of Christ falls on Sunday, the winter will be mild, the spring wet, the summer dry, and the autumn windy. The soldiers will rejoice, and the tsars will loose their crowns. There will be plenty of fruit and four-legged creatures, and much honey. The young will perish.

If the birth of Christ falls on Monday, the winter will be harsh, the spring and the summer wet, the harvest abundant, the rains heavy, and the autumn, dry. The grapes will be scarce, there will be less honey but much fruit, and many men will meet with a sudden death. There will be joy for the military commanders, gains for the tsar and the *bolijars*, and weeping for the noble women. Others will die from too much weeping.

If the birth of Christ falls on Tuesday, the winter will be snowy, the spring wet, the summer good, and the autumn dry. The wheat harvest will be weak, there will be less fruit, and the four-legged [creatures] will perish. There will be unexpected afflictions and those who swim will drown. There will be plenty of honey and butter. Among the Greeks there will be tribulations.

If the birth of Christ falls on Wednesday, the winter will be bitter, the spring dry, the summer good, and the autumn dry. The wheat harvest will be weak, of grapes will be plenty, and there will be fruit and honey in abundance. Men will perish. Butter will be hard to come by. Enemies will be successful in [making] peace.

If the birth [of Christ] falls on Thursday then the winter will be mild, the spring and summer, windy, fruit won't be plentiful, and the honey will diminish. The strong will perish. There will be plenty of butter and fruit [?].

If the birth of Christ falls on Friday, the winter will be unexpectedly bitter, the spring windy, the summer wet, the autumn, dry, and the grape harvest, abundant. Eye sores will spread, the youth will perish, and the soldiers will rejoice. There will be abundance of butter. The princes will be praised.

If the birth of Christ falls on Saturday, the winter will be harsh, windy, and it will snow layer upon layer. The spring will be windy as well, and the summer wet. The sheep will perish. There will be many fires, a three-day earthquake, and death for the old men.

End of the Christmas Book.

Gramnik [Book of Thunders]

Month of October. If it thunders on the first day, it foretells death. If it echoes, there will be joy and plenty. In the same month, if there is thunder and lightning during the day, everyone from East to West will rejoice, the country of Egypt will be under duress and will perish through jealousy and the beasts will devour it. If there is thunder and lightning at night those places will be seized by fear and boats will go under. It will be very windy, houses will be destroyed, and there will be plenty of poverty and wild beasts. The cattle will multiply. If there is an earthquake in the same month, many armies will perish. The sea will recede and then there will be much rain. If the quake is at night, then the people will diminish and locusts will appear and eat up the grain. There will be rain and the orchards will not bear fruit.

Month of September. If it thunders on the first day, it foretells the salvation of the world. If it echoes, it foretells battles of great men. In the same month, if it thunders during the day or lightning strikes it will be rainy, with a great silence, and the streams will overflow. In the same time there will be much fruit and food. People will sin through lechery and their houses will be whore-houses. Women and children will promptly die. In the same month, if it thunders during the night or lightning strikes, all people will get sick. Then many men will die by the sword or in the army. In the same month, if an earthquake occurs during the day, the grain will dry out, and there will be much fear among the people and heavy rains. But if the earthquake is at night, the people will slay the prince of that land.

Month of November. If it thunders at night, there will be much honey. Wise and righteous men will die. And if there is thunder and lightning during the day, there will be famine in the land of Arabia; it also means that the people who had earned human glory will win and soldiers will perish. A great city will be devastated. In that land the poor people will fall sick. If there is thunder and lightning at night, there will be fires in all lands and cities. Ships will go under. Beasts and people will multiply; the beasts will attack people and will be burned down by the skies. In the same month, if there is an earthquake during the day,

there will be peace among the tsars and among the people there will be great love. There will be no war but heavy rains will fall, there will be plenty of grain, and children and animals will die. If the earthquake is at night, there will be lasting peace. There will be no sorrow and grief, but a great joy among the people. It will be hard to plow. The sea creatures will multiply; then rains will get heavier.

Month of December. If it thunders or there is a lightning, Alomidans⁵⁴⁵ will wage war and will be sold in slavery, and their tsar will be slain by his slaves. There will be much grain and fruit. The winter everywhere will be long. Many men will die at sea. If there is thunder and lightning at night, the newborn will die. Other nations will be seized by famine and there will be unexpected death. A strong man will appear. Then the tsar will slay his enemies. In the same month, if there is earthquake during the day, the tsar will leave his city and his army and will go to other countries and other tsars. Churches will be abandoned and wild beasts will perish. Later, however, all cities will get respite from clamor, war, and death. It also foretells that there will be war with many cities and new people. It will happen that the tsar will leave his tsardom and will flee to other countries. His tsardom will not accept him, but churches will be desolate. There will be neither rain nor grain. Then, however, his tsardom will send for him and the cities will flourish and populous. The churches and provinces will find peace.

Month of January. If it thunders, it foretells many diseases. If it echoes, there will be no evil. If in the same month there is an earthquake during the day, there will be much fruit and streams will multiply. There will be great abundance of everything. If the quake occurs at night, there will be a civil war and riots among the people, murders, sighs, and many tears. Cities will be disturbed. The winter will be heavy, and there will be much fruit, grain, and good fields.

Month of February. If it thunders, it foretells good fortune for the world. If it echoes, there will be a great disaster in the world. If it thunders and there is a lightning in daytime it predicts downfall for *bolijars* of high rank and fires all over. There will be plenty of grain and the poor will become proud while the rich will be humbled. If the thunder and lightning occur at night there will be a great naval battle and on board ship. There will be plenty of grain and many an offspring among the domestic beasts. The *bolijars* will wage war between themselves out of

⁵⁴⁵ Mohametans, i.e., Muslims?

jealousy and then will make peace. If the earth shakes during daytime the elders of this land will see much good but there will be destruction for the elders of other towns. Much rain will fall and the grain will be good. If there is a shock at night there will be evil tribulations among the people and death in the cities. The people will slay the prince of that land. The churches will be deserted. Grain will multiply.

Month of March. If it thunders, there will be plenty of wheat and wine, and if it echoes, there will be war and perdition. If the thunder and lightning are in daytime, the earth will yield its fruit, fish will perish, and there will be plenty of animals. There will be peace among the great tsars, and much destruction both East and West. If the thunder and lightning occur at night it shows a great good. If it echoes, hail will hit the entire land.

Month of April. If it thunders, it foretells abundance of grain and wine. If there is an earthquake, neighboring tsars will wage war between themselves. Disturbances will grip the city and these people. Anger and envy will reign among the people. A great man will die, men will perish, rains will fall, and there will be much grain and fruit. If the earth shakes at night, there will be riots among the people. They will disobey their *boljars* and princes and will abandon their elders; they will think evil about their tsar and will not work for him. There will be no order in his army. The tsar of the West will die, there will be plenty of rain and by the end of summer plenty of grain. There will be famine in Egypt.

...

Month of June. If it thunders, a great man will die. If its echoes, it foretells famine. During the same month, if it thunders in daytime and there is lightning, people will become merciful and righteous and will enjoy the fruit of the labor of their hands. The earth and the sky will yield great bounty. The grain of that land will be good. If it thunders at night and there is lightning, it foretells disease, death, and capture for the people and death for sheep and horses. The Arabs will be destroyed. In the city where the portent will occur after that there will be abundance and joy. If there is earthquake, honest tsars and princes will be humbled and those who are humble will rise. The enemies will perish, and that place will be much praised. There will be much grain where the earth shakes. If the quake is at night, there will be exodus from that place, persecution, and enslavement. It will be the best of

years and there will be much glory. Here and there it will rain and there will be plenty of honey.

...

Month of August. If it thunders, a great man will die. If there is no echo, everything will be fine, there will be no evil. If it thunders and there is lightning during the day, laws will be abolished both east and west. The earth will bear much fruit but soldiers will come from abroad and eat it up. They will take over that land, bandits will appear, and there will be murder among them. If the thunder and lightning are at night, the tsar's soldiers will rise against him and will kill him. In the countries of the East there will be no grain and people will become like beasts. Many children will die. If there is earthquake during the day, there will be grief and sorrow, and it foretells disease as well. Cities will be devastated, somewhere a great church will catch fire and fruit trees will burn down. Vineyards will dry out and the earth will be shaken up by God's wrath. If the earth shakes up at night, the tsar will gain all of the earthly bounties. There will be rain and much grain, and fever as well.

Gramnik [Book of Thunders on Zodiac dates]

Pisces: If it thunders under the sign of Pisces the wheat will rot, there will be much evil for the people of the universe, famine and death in the realms, and then they will rise against each other and there will be war among their tsars. The winter will be good and the early [harvest] will be good. The oxen will suffer and beasts and animals East and West will die. If there is earthquake, terrible epidemics will spread everywhere.

Aries: If it thunders under the sign of Aries, this foretells destruction of everything valuable, all islands will be filled with dead human bodies and the lions will satiate their hunger devouring them.

Taurus: If it thunders under the sign of Taurus, wheat in that place will rot, there will be great joy in the realm, and in the East there will be killings, riots, and famine; a violent man will appear from a certain country and there will be afflictions and terrible diseases. Domestic beasts will die wholesale. If there is an earthquake, the heat will be oppressive and there will be a riot.

Gemini: If it thunders under the sign of Gemini, this shows spoiling for the wheat, bounty for the people, and death for those on the water. The late planting will be good and the winter will be harsh. There will

be less fruit of all kinds and in this country a violent man will raise and there will be great trouble, death for the powerful people, and the country will be conquered. The wheat and barley will rot while in other countries the threshing floors will overflow and in the West many will eat their fill; there will be fever; good fruit will be scarce and there will be less food. There will be poverty and death among the oxen. If there is a quake, prominent men will separate.

Cancer: If it thunders under the sign of Cancer that shows that there will be strong winds but the grain and the hay will not be spoiled and the threshing floors will be full with wheat and barley. In the countries of the West many will satiate their hunger; there will be a great clash, and good fruit will be scarce. There will be few vegetables and many will perish, and there will be much fruit. In the northern countries there will be a plague and the tsar of that country will perish. If there is an earthquake, fellows will forget about each other and powerful men will separate. There will be grief and sadness for the people of that country who live there.

Leo: If it thunders under the sign of Leo the wheat and other fruits will rot, the countries in the West will suffer from bodily pain, eshars, and scabies. The winter will be harsh and there will be pestilence among the animals. If there is an earthquake, the winter will be exceptionally harsh.

Virgo: If it thunders under the sign of Virgo that mean death for friends, enemies, and the tsar. There will be civil wars in the land of Egypt, and those on the water will perish. The wheat and the vegetables will rot and in the mountains everywhere things will get spoiled. In the plains things will be good and the winter will be late. People will be visited by sudden death and there will be little joy in the cities. If there is a quake, there will be diseases among the people.

Libra: If it thunders under the sign of Libra there will be battles and men will be cut down. There will be a free for all. There will be famine, the country will be full with wild beasts and there will be many omens. Men and women will die from ear disease and in the western countries there will be such a famine that people will leave and flee from that country. There will be pestilence among the domestic beasts. If there is an earthquake, there will be war in many places.

Scorpio: If it thunders under the sign of Scorpio there will be famine and death, the wheat will rot and the winter will be harsh. Fruit will be scarce and in the southern countries everything will perish. In that country there will be many robbers and they will rise against each other,

the tsar will be changed and another one will rise in his place. If there is earthquake, it means that there will be abundance and much joy.

Sagittarius: If it thunders under the sign of Sagittarius there will be struggle and lots of riots in that country. There will be plenty of all kind of fruit. In the mountains everything will get spoiled. The quadrupeds will multiply. Winter will be late and in the eastern land there will be many battles. Afterwards edible fruits will fall down and stink. Everywhere in the universe there will be joy. If there is an earthquake there will be pestilence among the flocks and death everywhere.

Capricorn: If it thunders under the sign of Capricorn it means that there will be much rain for four days, riots among the prominent men, there will be a new tsar in the East, there will be famine in the villages and a great storm, and ships in the sea will go under. If there is an earthquake, then the people in that country will perish.

Aquarius: If it thunders under the sign of Aquarius, that means that in some places there will be war and many diseases, there will be abundance of everything, animals will perish, and there will be grief among prominent people who will be replaced. If there is an earthquake, that means war great and migration.

Trepetnik [Book of Trembling]

If your right cheek trembles it foretells wealth for the rich and good for the poor. If it is the left side, it means success. If the top of the head trembles, it means sorrows from a friend. If it is the back [of the head it is about] weeping for the rich and good for the poor. If the right eye trembles, it means useful [things] for the poor. If it is the left eye, it means tears. If the left eyebrow trembles, it foretells some good. If it is the right one, it means injury, then good. If the nostrils tremble, this is good for both rich and poor. If the lips tremble, that means joy. If the right side of the tongue trembles, it means sorrow. If it is the left side, it is a good journey. If the teeth chatter, it means destruction. If the limbs on the right side tremble that means sorrow and great grief. If the left ear rings, it foretells some good. If it rings on the right side, it means good and honor. If the right side of the chin trembles that is good for everyone. If it is the left side of the chin it means sorrow and death. If the left shoulder trembles, it means sorrow. If it is the left armpit, glory for the wealthy, joy and consolation for the poor. If the left elbow trembles, work for the rich, joy for the poor. If the right elbow trembles it means joy. If the right arm trembles, it is infirmity

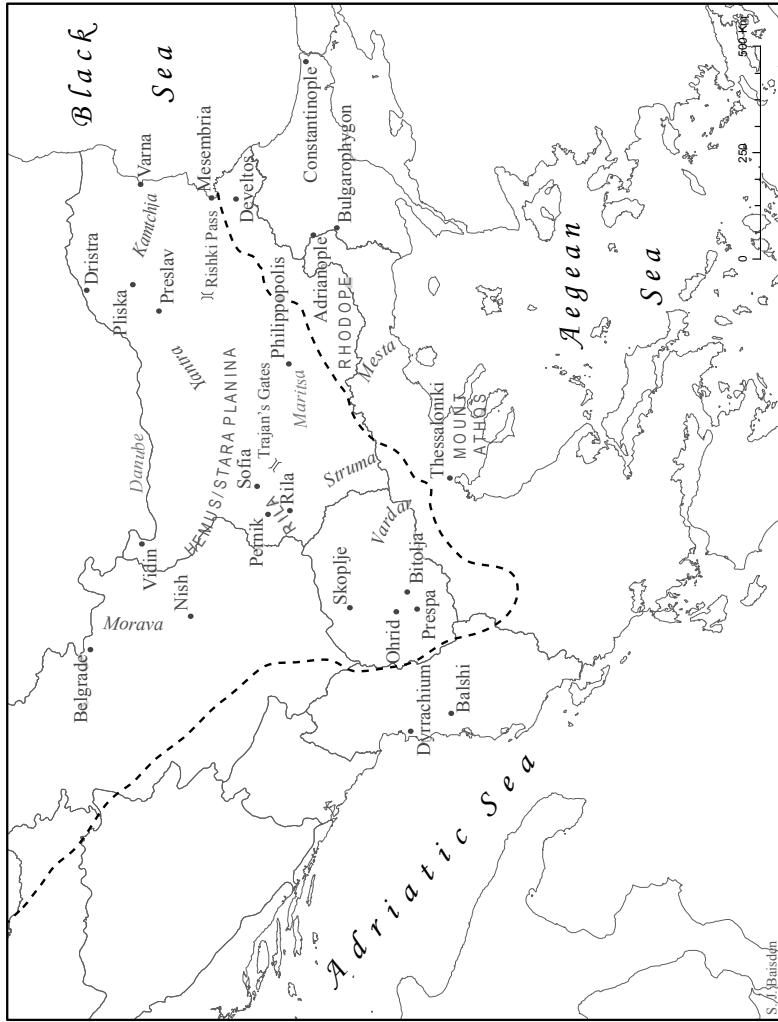
for the rich and work for the poor. If it is the left arm, it means safety for the world. If the thumb of the left hand trembles, it means that you will become lord and ruler and your enemies will perish. If the finger next to it trembles it means grief. If the ribs on the right side tremble it means joy. If those on the left do, [it means] a bad sickness. If the left knee trembles it means a journey. If it is the right thigh, trouble; the left means good and joy. If your leg trembles, you will have a lot of hard work. If it is the left leg, you will avoid a great illness. If a toe on the right foot trembles it foretells joy. If it is a toe on the left foot [it is about] monetary gain. End of the Book of Trembling.

Mesetsoslov [Book of Months]

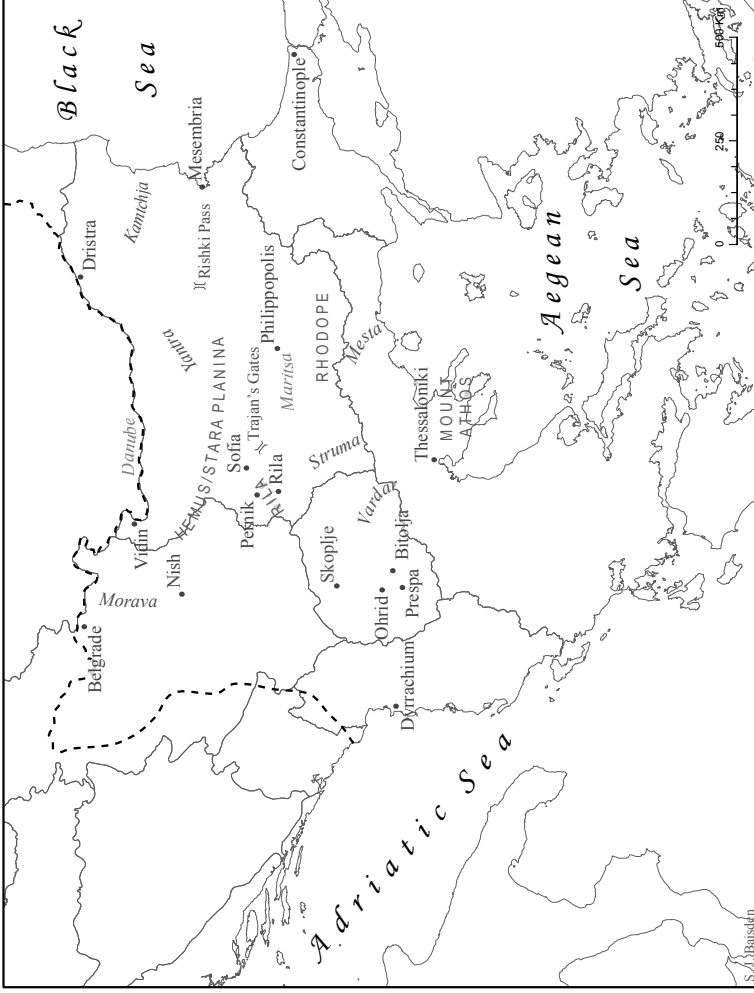
If someone gets sick on the first day of the month, it is dangerous for eighteen days. If these days pass, he will be weak for thirty days and will recover. If someone gets sick on the second day, the danger is for two days. The illness will be serious, but [the person] will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the third day, the illness will be light and they will recover. If [someone] gets sick on the fourth day, the danger is for one hundred and twenty four days. If [the person] makes it, [they] will recover. If [someone] gets sick on the fifth day, [they] will not recover; [the person] will be in bed for five days and will die. If [someone] falls sick on the sixth day [the person] will get as weak as if on death-bed, but will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the seventh day, [the person] will suffer greatly, but will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the eighth day, [the person] will get weaker and weaker for fifteen days and then will die. If [someone] gets sick on the ninth day [they] will suffer much but will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the tenth day, [they] will die on the second day. If [someone] gets sick on the eleventh day, they will get well soon. If [someone] gets sick on the twelfth day there is hope for fifteen days and after that [if the person is still not well] they will die. If [someone] gets sick on the thirteenth day the worst will be for nineteen days, if they get past that they will make it. If [someone] gets sick on the fourteenth day, they will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the fifteenth day, it is up to God. If [someone] gets sick on the sixteenth day the illness will be light and they will get well. If [someone] gets sick on the seventeenth day the danger is for nineteen days, after these days have passed, they will get well. If [someone] gets sick on the eighteenth day, it is God's will. If [someone] gets sick on the nineteenth day, it is God's will. If [someone] gets sick on the twentieth day, they

will be sick for nineteen days and then will get well. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-first day, they will die. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-second day, they will be sick for twelve days and will get well. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-third day, they will suffer much but will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-fourth day, they will be weak for twenty-one days and will get well. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-fifth day, they will be sick for ten days and will die. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-sixth day the illness will be light and they will get well. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-seventh day, they will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-eighth day, they will suffer much for nineteen days and after so many days have passed, they will die. If [someone] gets sick on the twenty-ninth day, the danger is up to the eighteenth day, after that they will not die. If [someone] gets sick on the thirtieth day, the danger is up to the eleventh day, after that they will not die.

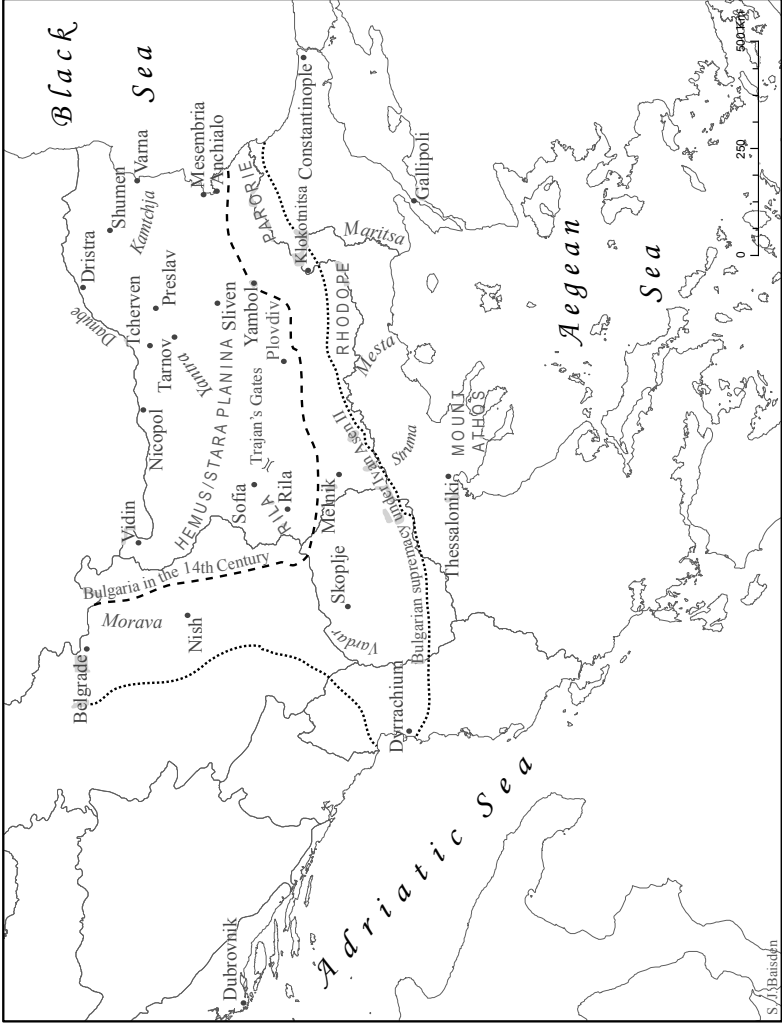
MAPS



Map 1. First Bulgarian Tsardom



Map 2. Bulgarian Lands Under Byzantine Rule



Map 3. Second Bulgarian Tsardom

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1 Ring seals-monograms of Koubrat: Most of the information about Koubrat comes from Byzantine authors, see Carl de Boor, ed., Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia* (Leipzig, 1883), idem, ed. Nicephorus Archiepiscopus Constantinopolitanus, *Opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880), and R. H. Charles, trans., *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* (Oxford, 1916). For a review of earlier renditions and the most recent interpretation of the rings as marks of Koubrat's transition into manhood, rulership, and baptism see Zarko Zhdrakov, "Za trite zlatni prastena s monogrami na Kan Kubrat," *Palaeobulgaria*, 29:4 (2005), 84–94. Full description of the funeral complex of Malaja Pereshchepina with photos of the ring seals: Joachim Werner, *Pogrebnata nahodka ot Malaja Pereshchepina i Kubrat, han na balgarite* (Sofia, 1988) and V. Zalesskaya et al., *Zlatoto na khan Kubrat. Pereshchepinskoto sakrovishte* (Sofia, 2006). Detailed analysis of the archeology of the region offers Dimitar Dimitrov, *Prabalgariite po severnoto i zapadnoto Tchernomorie* (Varna, 1987). About the title of *patrician* given to Bulgar rulers by Byzantine emperors on a variety of occasions see R. Guillard, "Contribution a la prosopographie de l'empire byzantin: Les patrices," *Byzantion* 49:2 (1970), 317–360.

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sketches about the Bulgar rulers are available in Jordan Andreev, *Balgarskite hanove i tsare: Istoriko-hronologicheski spravochnik* (Sofia, 1988).

2 *Lead seal of Mauros*: The principal source about Mauros is the collection of miracles attributed to St Demetrius, see Philippe Lemerle, *Les plus anciennes Recueils des Miracles de Saint Demetrius*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1979–1981). On Mauros see Jordanka Jurukova, “Mavar ot pismenite izvori i pechatite,” *Vekove*, 3 (1980), 5–12. The period is discussed extensively by Petar Petrov, *Obrazovane na balgarskata darzhava* (Sofia, 1981).

3–9 *Seals of Slavic chiefs and Bulgar rulers*: For a discussion of the standing of the Slavic enclaves in the region see the collection of Vasilka Tapkova-Zaimova, *Byzance et les Balkans a partir du VI^e siècle. Les mouvements ethniques et les états* (London, 1979); and Werner Seibt, “Siegel als Quelle für Slawenarchonten in Griechenland,” *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, 6 (1999), 27–36; idem, “Weitere Beobachtungen zu Siegeln früher Slawenarchonten in Griechenland,” in A. Avramea, A. Laiou, E. Chrysos, eds., *Byzantium: State and Society. In memory of Nikos Oikonomides* (Athens, 2003), 459–66.

10 *Name List of the Bulgar Khans*: Ever since the Russian Slavist Andrei Popov published the first two copies in 1866, the literature on the *Name List* is large and growing. Some of the basic works: Geza Feher, “Imennik na parvite balgarski hanove” *Godishnik na narodnija muzei za 1922–1924* (Sofia, 1924); Mikhail Tikhomirov, “Imennik bolgarskih knjazei,” *Vestnik drevnei istorii* 3 (1946), 81–90; Veselin Beshevliev, *Die protobulgarischen Inschriften* (Berlin, 1963), 306–323; Hermann Haussig, “Die protobulgarische Fürstenliste,” in Franz Altheim and Hermann W. Haussig, *Die Hunnen in Osteuropa. Einen Forschungsbericht* (Baden-Baden, 1958), 9–29; Omeljan Pritsak, *Die bulgarische Fürstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren* (Wiesbaden, 1955); Ivan Dujchev, “Imennikat na parvobalgaskite hanove’ i balgarskata darzhavna traditsija,” *Vekove*, 1 (1973), 5–11; Boris Rogev, *Astronomicheski osnovi na parvobalgarskoto letobroene* (Sofia, 1974); Ivan Bogdanov, *Imennik na balgarskite hanove. Kritichno izdanie s komentar i objasnitelni belezhki* (Sofia, 1981); Mosko Moskov, *Imennik na balgarskite hanove (novo talkuvane)* (Sofia, 1988).

11–27 *Bulgar stone annals and inscriptions*: The basic work providing critical editions and commentaries is Veselin Beshevliev, *Die protobulgarischen Inschriften* (Berlin, 1963). The events mentioned are discussed in detail by Zlatarski, *Istoriya na balgarskata darzhava*, vol. I:1, 321–602; *Istoria na Balgaria*, vol. 2, 127–181; Beshevliev, *Parvobalgari*, 96–161; Andreev, *Balgarskite hanove i tsare*, 27–47. On the titles of the Bulgar rulers see Veselin Beshevliev, “Die Kaiseridee bei den Protobulgaren,” *Byzantina*, 3 (1971), 81–92; Georgi Bakalov, *Srednovekovnijat balgarski vladetel. Tutulatura i insignii* (Sofia, 1985), 76–96; Milijana Kaimakamova, “Balgarskijat han v svetlinata na parvobalgarskite nadpisi ot VIII–IX vek,” in *JUBILAEUS IV. Sbornik v pamet na chl. kor. Veselin Beshevliev* (Sofia, 2000), 48–59 and Tsvetelin Stepanov, “Vladetel, doktrinerika, i titulni praktiki v iztochna Evropa prez VI–IX vek,” in *Balgarije v Severnoto Prichernomorie*, 7 (Veliko Tarnovo, 2000), 199–211, translated into English as “Rulers, Doctrines, and Title Practices in Eastern Europe, 6th–9th Centuries,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 14 (2005), 263–79. On the title *kavhan* see Vasil Gjuzeev, “Funktsiite i roljata na kavhana v zhivota na parvata balgarska darzhava,” *Godishnik na Sofijskija Universitet, Filozofsko-Istoriicheski Fakultet*, vol. 60 (1966), 133–57. On the other technical terms denoting rank and status among the Bulgar elite (as well as of late medieval Bulgarian nobility) see Jordan Trifonov, “Kam vaprosa za starobalgarskoto boljjarstvo,” *Spisanie na Balgarskata Akademija na Naukite*, 26 (1923), 1–70.

28–30 *Records of persecutions of Christians*: For the Byzantine Greek text see H. Delehaye, ed., “Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae,” *Prophylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum*, Novembris (Brussels, 1902). For the veracity of the source and the events described see

Enrico Fallieri and Ivan Dujchev, "Un' acoluta inedita per i primi martiri di Bulgaria dell'anno 813," *Byzantion* 33 (1963), 71–106, and Beshevliev, *Parvobalgari*, 135–139.

30 *Farmers' Law*: Additional analysis and commentaries in Michail Andreev and Dimiter Angelov, *Istorija na balgarskata srednovekovna darzhava i pravo* (4th ed., Sofia, 1972), *passim*; Elena Lipshits, Ivan Medvedev, and Ekaterina Pjetrovskaja, eds., *Vizantijskii zemledelcheskij zakon. Tekst, issledovanie, komentarij* (Leningrad, 1984). The extant South Slavic copies of the *Law* confirm its early translation, no doubt for the needs of the newly Christianized Bulgarian legislative system; see for a copy B. S. Radojčić, "Srpski rukopis zemljoradichkog zakona," *Žbornik radova Srpske Akademije Nauki, Vizantoloshki institut*, vol. 45:3 (Belgrade, 1955), 15–27.

31 *Khan Krum's Laws*: Gavril Katsarov, "Die Gesetzgebung des bulgarischen Fürsten Krum," *Bizantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. 16 (1907); Ljubomir Jonchev, "Njakoi vaprosi odnosno Krumovoto zakonodatelstvo," *Izvestija na Institutata za istorija na Balgaria*, vol. 6 (1956), 631–76; Andreev and Angelov, *Istorija na balgarskata srednovekovna darzhava i pravo*, *passim*; Kiril Petkov, "Njakoi belezhki varhu Krumovoto zakonodatelstvo," *Studia Protobulgarica et mediaevalia europensia: V chest na profesor Veselin Beshevliev* (Veliko Tarnovo, 1993), 47–58.

32 *Pope Nicolas I's Answers to the Questions of the Bulgarians*: Commentaries in Dimiter Dechev, ed., *Nicolaus I Papa, Responsa ad consulta Bulgarorum (anno 866)* (Sofia, 1939); Ivan Dujchev, "Die Responsa Nicolai I. papae ad consulta Bulgarorum als Quelle für die bulgarische Geschichte," *Festschrift Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1949), 349–62; idem, "I 'Responsa' papa Nicolò I ai Bulgari neoconvertiti," *Aevum*, 5–6 (1968), 403–428; and Ludwig Heiser, *Die Responsa ad consulta Bulgarorum des Papstes Nikolaus I. (858–867): Ein Zeugnis päpstlicher Hirtensorge und ein Dokument unterschiedlicher Entwicklungen in der Kirchen von Rom und Konstantinopel* (Diss., Münster 1978).

33 *Vestiges of pagan belief*: On the Bulgar traditions see Veselin Beshevliev, *Parvobalgarite: bit i kultura* (Sofia, 1981); a general discussion of traditional culture Dimiter Angelov, *Balgarinat v srednovekovieto: svetogled, ideologija, dushevnost* (Varna, 1985); anthropological insights in Ivan Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno na prabalgarite* (Sofia, 1983).

34–42 *Seals of Bulgarian rulers and lay and ecclesiastical leaders*: For most recent commentaries see Jordanov, *Korpus*. The events around the adoption of the imperial title by Simeon are best analyzed by Ivan Bozhilov, *Tsar Simeon Veliki. Žlatnijat vek na srednovekovna Balgaria* (Sofia, 1983) and idem, "L'idéologie politique du tsar Syméon: Pax Simeonica," *Byzantino-Bulgarica*, 8 (1986), 73–88. See also Vesselina Vatchkova, *Simeon Veliki. Patjat kam koronata na Zapada*, (Sofia, 2005) and Rasho Rashev, *Tsar Simeon. Strichi kam lichnostta i deloto mu* (Sofia, 2007). On the titles of the royal princes and the succession issue see P. Georgiev, "Titlata i funktsiite na balgarskija prestolonaslednik a vaprosat za prestolonasledieto pri tsar Simeon (893–927)," *Istoricheski Pregled*, 8–9 (1992), 3–12. On the presence of female royalty see Sashka Georgieva, "The Byzantine Princesses in Bulgaria," *Byzantino-Bulgarica*, 9 (1995), 163–201 and Jonathan Shepard, "A marriage too far? Maria Lakapena and Peter of Bulgaria," in A. Davids, ed., *The Empress Theophano. Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), 121–49.

43 *Inscription from Balshi*: Detailed analysis in Vasil Zlatarski, "Namerenijat v Albanija nadpis s imeto na balgarskija knjaz Boris-Mihaila," *Slavia* 2 (1923–1924), 61–91. The best discussion of Khan/Prince Boris-Michael and his time is by Vasil Gjuzeev, *Knjaz Boris I. Balgaria prez vtorata polovina na IX vek* (Sofia, 1969). On the conversion of the South Slavs and the Bulgarians F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs: SS Constantin-Cyril and Methodius* (Brunswick, NJ, 1970) and A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom. An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 1970).

44 *Latin inscription commemorating the rededication of a church*: Kazimir Popkonstantinov, "Latinskata misija prez 866–870 g. i otrazhenieto i v starobalgarskata kultura (po arheologicheski i epigraphski danni)," *Die Slavische Sprachen*, 11 (1987), 115–21.

45 *Inscription of chartophylax Paul*: Kazimir Popkonstantinov and Albina Medyntseva, *Nadpisi iz Krugloj Tserkvi v Preslave* (Sofia, 1984).

#47 *Boundary inscription from 904*: For the context see Peter Koledarov, "Administrative structure and frontier setup of the First Bulgarian Tsardom," *Études balkaniques*, 3 (1978), 132–40; for a detailed discussion see Jordan Andreev, "Naryshkaia nadpis knjaza Simeona i administrativnoe ustroistvo bolgarskogo gosudarstva v kontse IX i nachale X veka," *Études Balkaniques* vol. 14 (1978), 121–31.

51 *Inscription of zhupan Dimiter*: V. Gjuzlev, "Dobrudjanskij nadpis i sabitijata v Balgaria prez 943 godina," *Istoricheski Pregled*, 6 (1968), 40–48; Ivan Bozhilov, "L'insription du jupan Dimitre de l'an 943 (théories et faits)," *Études Historiques*, 6 (1973), 11–28.

52 *Memorial inscription from 993*: The groundwork for the competing interpretations was laid by Jordan Ivanov, "Proizhod na tsar Samuilovija rod," *Sbornik V. N. Zlatarski* (Sofia, 1927), 55–62 and N. Adontz, "Samuel d'Armenien, roi des Bulgares," *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Belgique. Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques* (Brussels, 1938), 1–38. See also A. Leroy-Molingén, "Les fils de la Bulgarie et les Cometopules," *Byzantion*, 42 (1972), 405–19. See detailed discussion in A. Sabotina, *Balgarskij proizvod na tsar-Samuilovija rod* (Sofia, 2005).

54–67 *Graffiti from ecclesiastical foundations*: The ground-laying work belongs to Kazimir Popkonstantinov; see his *AI* (co-authored with Otto Kronsteiner) as well as idem, "Dva starobalgarski nadpisa ot skalnija manastir pri Krepcha, Targovishtki okrag," *Arheologija* 3 (1977), 17–24; "Dva starobalgarski nadpisa ot Preslav," *Vekove* 4 (1980), 26–31; "Dvuezichni nadpisi i abecedari ot starobalgarskija manastir pri Ravna, Varnenski okrag," *Izvestija na narodnija muzei Varna* 20 (35) (1984), 65–80; "Die Inschriften des Felsklosters Murfatlar," *Die Slavische Sprachen*, 10 (1986), 77–106; "Die Verbreitung des albulgarischen Schrifttums. Auf Grund von Inschriften," *Die Slavische Sprachen* 8 (1985), 167–200; K. Popkonstantinov and Rossina Kostova, "Literacy, Literature, and Liturgy in Bulgarian Monasteries of the 9th and 10th Centuries," in *Love of Learning and Devotion to God in Orthodox Monasteries* (5th International Hilandar Conference, Belgrade-Columbus, OH) (2006), 145–63; see also Rossina Kostova, "Some Aspects of Daily Life of Monks in an Early Medieval Bulgarian Monastery," in *La vie quotidienne des moines et canoines réguliers au Moyen Âge et temps modernes. Actes du premier colloque international du L.A.R.H.C.O.R., Wrocław-Ksiaz 30 Novembre–4 December 1994* (Wrocław, 1995), 710–21.

69 *Note to the Old Bulgarian Translation of Athanasius of Alexandria's Sermon*: The text of the sermons is extant in five manuscripts, all of them Russian, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the oldest one, dated in 1489, there is a note stating that the clerk has followed strictly Constantine of Preslav's Old Bulgarian text. It is likely that the author was Boris' nephew, son of his brother Doks. See Andre Vaillant, *Discours contre les ariens de Saint Athanase* (Sofia, 1954) and Klimentina Ivanova, *Balgarski, srbski, i moldo-vlahijski rakopisi v sbirkata na M. P. Pogodin* (Sofia, 1981) and Tatjana Laleva, "Taka narechenoto chetvarto slovo na Atanasij Alexandrijski sreshtu arianite v prevod na Konstantin Preslavski," *Starobalgarska Literatura* 22 (1990), 108–62.

#70 *The Miracle of St George with the Bulgarian*: The most recent commentary and critical edition of the entire cycle of the miracles of the iron cross is Ancho Kaloyanov, Maria Spasova, and Todor Mollov, eds., "Skazanie za zheleznja krust" i vekal na tsar Simeon, (Veliko Tarnovo, 2007).

#71 *Ceremonial formulas for diplomatic receptions*: A concise survey with good bibliography is offered by Georgi Bakalov, *Srednovekovinijat bulgarski vladetel: Titulatura i insignii* (Sofia, 1985). See also Genadij Litavrin, "Konstantin Bagrjanorodnij o Bolgarii i bolgarah," *Sbornik v chest na akad. Dimitar Angelov* (Sofia, 1994), 30–37.

72 *Correspondence between Prince Simeon and Leo Choerosphactos*: For the context see Bozhilov, *Tsar Simeon Veliki*, passim.

73 *Law for Judging the Common People (Zakon Sudnyj Ljudem)*: The best short discussion of the literature and debates over the *Law* is the Introduction to Horace W. Dewey and Ann M. Kleimola, eds. and trans., *Zakon sudnyj ljudem (Court Law for the People)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, 1977) [Michigan Slavic Materials, no. 14], i–xvii. For the textual and manuscript history of the short version translated here see Michael Tichomirov, ed., *Zakon sudnyj ljudem kratkoi redaktsii* (Moscow, 1961). The major issue is the *Law*'s provenance. There are two serious theories, "Bulgarian" and "Moravian." The older literature is surveyed by Heinrich Oroschakoff, "Ein Denkmal des bulgarischen Rechts (Zakon sudnyj ljudem)," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* 33 (1916), with a full translation of the *Law* in German on pp. 197–254. The Bulgarian theory places the origin of the text in 866–868 and relates it to Prince Boris' need for Christian legislation: see the edition of Venelin Ganev, *Zakon soudnyj ljud'm* (Sofia, 1959) and Michail Andreev, "Sur l'origine du 'Zakon sudnyj ljudem' (loi pour juer les gens)," *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, I: 3–4 (1963), 335–7. The Moravian provenance of the *Law* and a date around 870s–880s as well as its authorship by Methodius is defended by Jaroslav Vašica, "Origine cyrillo-méthodienne du plus ancien code slave dit 'Zakon sudnyj ljudem,'" *Byzantinoslavica* 12 (1951) and Vladislav Procházka, "Le 'Zakon sudnyj' ljud'm' et la Grand Moravie," *Byzantinoslavica* 29:1 (1968). The theories arguing for "Macedonian" (?), "Serbian," "Russian," or "Pannonian" provenance are inspired more by the spirit of contradiction and nationalism than critical analysis.

74–76, 87–88 *Works of Clement of Ohrid*: There is a large body of studies dedicated to Clement's life and literary activity. Some of the milestones: N. Tunizkiy, *Sv. Kliment, episkop slovenskij. Ego zhizn i prosvetitel'skaja dejatel'nost* (Sergiev Posad, 1913); I. Snegarov, *Sv. Kliment Ohridski* (Sofia, 1927); Tz. Todorov, *Sv. Kliment Ohridski* (Sofia, 1945); W. Baumann, *Die Faszination des Heiliges bei Kliment Ohridski* (Munich, 1983); K. Stanchev and Georgi Popov, *Kliment Ohridski: Zhivot i tvorcestvo* (Sofia, 1988). On the eulogy of Constantine-Cyril see Konstantin Mechev, "Kam literaturnata karakteristika na Obstoto pohvalno slovo za Kiril i Metodij," in *Konstantin-Kiril Filosof. Jubileen sbornik po sluchaj 1100-godishnina ot smartta mu* (Sofia, 1969), 95–104.

77–79, 81 *Works of Constantine of Preslav and Hrabr the Monk*: Emil Georgiev, *Raztsvetat na bulgarskata literature prez IX–X vek* (Sofia, 1962) is still the most useful one-stop survey. Literature on Constantine: V. Zlatarski, "Naj-starijat istoricheski trud v starobalgarskata knizhnina," *Spisanie na BAN*, 27 (1923), 132–82; A. Vaillant, *Discours contre les Ariens de Saint Athanase. Version slave et traduction en français* (Sofia, 1954); *Istorija na bulgarskata literatura*, I, 112–26; E. Georgiev, *Raztsvetat na bulgarskata literatura*, 161–201; K. Kuev, *Azbučnata molitva v slavjanskite literaturi* (Sofia, 1974); E. Zikov, "K biografii Konstantina Preslavskogo," *Starobalgarska Literatura: izsledvanija i materiali* 2 (Sofia, 1977), 74–101; The fullest though not complete edition of the *Gospel's Instruction* with commentary is still Archbishop Antonius' *Iz istorii hrištianskoj propovedi* (19 sermons); sermon 4 is available in a French translation in A. Vaillant, "Une homélie de Constantin le Prêtre," *Byzantinoslavica* 1 (1967), 68–81. The work is most convincingly dated around 889–893; fullest discussion in Ivan Dobrev, "Za Aleksandrijskoto i moravsko-panonskoto letobroene i za njakoi dati v starata slavjanska pismenost," *Godishnik na Sofijskija Universitet, Fakultet po slavjanski filologii*, vol. 69:2 (1976). The person of Hrabr is still a mystery. On Hrabr: V. Zlatarski,

“Koi e bil Tchernorizec Hrabr?” *Istorija na balgarskata darzhava*, vol. I:2, 820–29; *Istorija na balgarskata literatura*. vol. 1. *Starobalgarska literatura* (Sofia, 1962), 142–53; E. Georgiev, *Raztsvetat na balgarskata literatura*, 304–29; V. Tkadlcik, “Le moine Chrabr et l’origine de l’écriture slave” *Byzantinoslavica*, 1 (1964), 75–92; J. Vlasek, “Quelques notes sur l’apologie par Chrabr. Essai d’une conception nouvelle,” *Byzantinoslavica*, 1 (1967), 82–97; R. Picchio, “On the textual criticism of Hrabr’s Treatise,” *Studies in Slavic Linguistics and Poetics in Honor of Boris O. Unbegaun* (New York-London, 1968), 139–48; A. Djambeluka-Kossova and E. Dogramadjieva, *Tchernorizec Hrabr. O pismenih* (Sofia, 1980).

82–84 *Heresy*: Of the older works in Western languages D. Obolensky, *The Bogomils. A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Cambridge, 1948) stands out; the principal work remains Dimitar Angelov, *Bogomilstvoto v Balgaria* (3rd ed., Sofia, 1980); in French: idem, *Le bogomilisme en Bulgarie* (Toulouse, 1972). On Kosmas Presbyter see A. Vaillant and H. Puech, eds., *Le traité contre les Bogomiles du prêtre Cosmas* (Paris, 1945); V. Kiselkov, *Presviter Kosma i negovite tvorenija* (Sofia, 1943); J. Begunov, *Kosma Presviter v slavjanskih literaturah* (Sofia, 1973).

85 *John Exarch*: On John’s title see K. Kuev, “Kam vaprosa za titlata ‘exarch’ v starobalgarskata literatura,” *Izvestija na Institutata za istorija* vol. 14–15 (1964), 325–44; P. Dimitrov, “Za titlata na Joan Ekzarh: ‘Ekzarh balgarski,’” *Palaeobulgarica*, 1 (1980): 82–88; on his manner of translation: A. Leskien, “Die Übersetzungskunst des Exarchen Johannes,” *Archiv für Slavische Philologie* 25 (1903), 48–66 and E. Hansack, “Der Übersetzungsstil des Exarchen Johannes,” *Palaeobulgarica*, 3 (1977), 33–59; on his worldview H. Jaksche, “Das Weltbild im Sestodnev des Exarchen Johannes,” *Die Welt der Slaven*, 6 (1959), 258–301 and L. Sadnik, *Des hl. Johannes von Damaskus ‘EKTESIS AKRIBES TES ORTHODOXON PISTEOS’ in der Übersetzung des Exarchen Johannes* (Wiesbaden, 1967); new works attributed to him are still coming to light. A modern comprehensive study of John’s life and contribution to the formation of Bulgarian and Slavic ecclesiastical, poetic, linguistic, theological, and philosophical traditions is badly needed; K. Kalajodovic, *Ioann, Eksarch bolgarskij* (Moskva, 1824) is badly outdated and the surveys *Istorija na balgarskata literatura*. vol. 1. *Starobalgarska literatura*, 127–140 and E. Georgiev, *Raztsvetat na balgarskata literatura*, 202–290 cover only segments of John’s literary activity. On the political thought in Exarch’s time see Tsvetana Cholova, “Varhovnata vlast i upravlenieto v srednovekovnata balgarska darzhava po vremeto na Simeon otrazeni v ‘Shestodneva’ na Ioan Exarch,” *Izvestija na Institutata za Istorija* 28 (1985), 216–36; Ts. Stepanov, *Vlasti i avtoritet v rannosrednovekovna Balgarija (VII–sredata na XI vek)* (Sofia, 1999); and the survey of Angel Nikolov, *Politicheskata misal v rannosrednovekovna Balgarija (sredata na IX–kraja na X vek)* (Sofia, 2006).

89 *First Life of Naum*: E. Trapp, “Die Viten des. Hl. Naum von Ochrid,” *Byzantinoslavica*, 35:2 (1974), 161–85; Vasil Zlatarski, “Slavjanskoto zhitie na Nauma ot XVI vek,” *Spisanie na BAN*, 30:17 (1925), 1–28.

91 *Testament of St John of Rila*: The most detailed work is Ivan Goshev, “Zavetat na sv. Ivan Rilski v svetlinata na starobalgarskoto i vizantijskoto kulturno-istoricheskoto literaturno predanie IX–XIV vek,” *Godishnik na Duhovnata Akademia* vol. 4 (Sofia, 1954–1955), 431–505. The most cogent assessment of the *Testament* is Ivan Dujchev’s work, see V. Velinova, ed., *Zavetat na sv. Ivan Rilski. Iz archivnoto nasledstvo na Ivan Dujchev* (Sofia, 2000), 25–72. Although the *Testament* undoubtedly rests on an authentic tenth century document, the extant narrative has at least two more text “layers,” one from the fourteenth and the second from the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. See most recently Snezhana Pencheva and Nikola Nikolov, “Za prepisite na Zaveta na sv. Ivan Rilski,” *Palaeobulgarica*, 3 (1997), 77–93.

93 Tale of the Tree of the Cross: Short discussion in Emil Georgiev, *Literatura na izostreni borbi v srednovekovna Balgaria* (Sofia, 1962), 202–225.

95 *Prayers against evil spirit*: A. I. Jatsimirskij, “K istorii lozhnih molitv v juznoslavjanskoj pismennosti,” *Izvestija otdela ruskogo jazika i slovesnosti*, 18:3 (1914), 102; Donka Petkanova, “Folklorat v apokrifnite molitvi,” *Balgarski Folklor* 2 (1976), 28–40; S. Kempgen and U. Schweiger, “**НЕЖИТЪ**: quid est ignoratur. Zur Deutung und Bedeutung eines mittelbulgarischen Amulettes,” in *Slavistische Linguistik. Referate des XXI. Konstanzer Slavistischen Arbeitstreffens, Mainz 26–29. 9. 1995* (Munich, 1996).

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